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# LIBERTY AND CONCORD IN THE UNITED PROVINCES

*Religious Toleration and the Public  
in the Eighteenth-Century Netherlands*

BY

JORIS VAN EIJNATTEN



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Joris van Eijnatten  
Almere, May 2002

## ABBREVIATIONS

- BL:** *Biografisch Lexicon voor de Geschiedenis van het Nederlandse Protestantisme*, D. Nauta *et al.*, eds., 3 vols., Kampen 1978–
- Heinemeyer:** Diederich Ulrich Heinemeyer, 'Das gelehrte Batavien', ms University Library Leiden, shelf number Ltk 867
- Jongenelen:** Ton Jongenelen, *Van smaad tot erger. Amsterdamse boekverboden 1747–1794*, Amsterdam 1998
- NB:** *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* (. . .), Amsterdam 1774–1788
- NNBW:** *Nieuw Nederlands Biografisch Woordenboek*, P.C. Molhysen and P.J. Blok eds., 10 vols., Leiden 1911–1937
- PGVCG:** *Prysverhandelingen van het Genootschap tot Verdediging van den Christelijken Godsdienst*, Amsterdam etc. 1787–1797
- Springer-Klassen:** N.P. Springer and A.J. Klassen, *Mennonite Bibliography 1631–1961*, 2 vols., Scottdale (PA), Kitchener (Ont) 1977
- Verhandelingen TGG:** *Verhandelingen, raakende den natuurlijken en geopenbaarden godsdienst uitgegeven door Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap*, 20 vols., Haarlem 1781–1802
- VB:** *Vaderlandsche Bibliotheek van Wetenschap, Kunst en Smaak*, Amsterdam 1789–1796
- VL:** *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen* (. . .), Amsterdam 1763–1811





## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 THE PERSISTENCE OF CONCORD

At first glance, a book treating the idea of religious concord in the Low Countries may seem beside the point. There is scarcely any region in Western Europe that for most of its early modern and modern past has exhibited such an extreme degree of religious diversity as the Netherlands. Religious pluralism has been a characteristic facet of Dutch culture for at least four centuries. During that period the Dutch have been praised or berated for their policies and practices of toleration, not for their attempts to reach some degree of unanimity in religious affairs.

A penchant for religious multiplicity rather than concord is seen as a, or even *the*, typical Dutch trait.<sup>1</sup> The religious history of the later nineteenth and most of the twentieth century doubtless provides some basis for this belief. The period is frequently described as the era of ‘pillarization’ (*verzuijing*), or, more technically, ‘consociationalism’.<sup>2</sup> Pillarization refers to a form of ideological and religious segregation involving the division of society into a number of highly organized ‘pillars’ (*zuilen*), each based on its own denomination or ideology. Roman Catholics, orthodox Protestants, Socialists, and to some extent perhaps even Liberals, each had their own hierarchical pillar, and each group developed its own organizations and institutes. During the heyday of pillarization between the 1920s and the 1960s, each pillar had its political party, trade union, educational institutions, broadcasting corporation, newspapers and publishing houses, agricultural cooperatives, psychiatric hospitals, homes for the elderly, housing corporations, youth and women’s organizations, sports associations, and so on. Some measure of integration could be found at the top of the hierarchies, notably at the political level, where

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tash, *Dutch pluralism*.

<sup>2</sup> Ellemers, ‘Pillarization as a process of modernization’; Daalder, ‘Consociationalism, center and periphery in the Netherlands’.

representatives of the various groups formed coalition cabinets based on cooperation and consensus. Pillarization gradually disappeared after the 1960s, as the churches lost members, the influence of the media spread, and the self-awareness of the rank and file grew.

This twentieth-century tradition of religious and ideological diversity has left deep marks in Dutch history writing. Some historians have even raised the question of whether or not early modern Dutch society was also 'pillarized'.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, to the casual observer seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch society may seem similarly segregated along denominational lines. Calvinists, Remonstrants, Mennonites, Lutherans and Jews each had their own places of worship, their own social networks and their own set of norms and values. Within each social group, education, poor relief, marriage life, consumption and trade were subject to confessional control. Each group had its own schoolbooks, catechisms, orphanages and patterns of spending, and demonstrated the characteristics of a more or less integrated sub-culture. This lasted until 1750, when a period of 'de-pillarization' began, characterized by a more unitary culture and less confessional control. Thus, pillarization and de-pillarization seem to be recurrent phenomena in Dutch history. But appearances deceive. The political and religious context of modern pillarization differed substantially from that of the Old Regime. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, denominational sub-cultures were able to retain their own distinct identities, and meanwhile cooperate within the state, because citizens shared certain common national values. Central to the development of pillarization was an appreciation of the articulate individual, rather than public institutions, as the primary locus at which shared values converged. The formation of a body of national values, and the attempt to educate the masses according to these values, were basic to the process of pillarization. To function properly as members of a 'pillar', individuals had to be aware, not only of the values embodied by the particular ideological group to which they belonged, but also of the national and democratic values which made possible the cooperation of various denominational sub-cultures within the state. Modern pillarization was a dynamic phenomenon and a successful one too. In retrospect, the pillars can be seen as having been instrumental to the emancipation of subordinate groups (prin-

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<sup>3</sup> Groenveld, *Huisgenoten des geloofs*.

cially Roman Catholics, orthodox Calvinists and the labouring class) and their integration into a uniform Dutch society. Pillarization led to the general modernization of society, among other things through the extensive use of modern mass media.

By contrast, in early modern society the locus of shared values was not primarily the individual, but a complex aggregate of institutional bodies recognized by the state through charters, privileges, statutes, and confessions of faith. As the repository of shared values, this aggregate of institutional bodies together represented and controlled the public sphere, under the aegis of the political authorities. All institutions, and, above all, those organized along denominational lines, required the state's formal approbation to function as public or semi-public bodies. They were therefore expected to fulfil a number of conditions laid down by the state. Denominational diversity did not result in a democratic competition for political power between pillars that used their various ideological commitments as a means to attract potential supporters or voters. The elites of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries lacked both the common purpose (exemplified by national values) and the means (the possibility to sublimate and organize conflict through democratic processes) of the later 'pillarized' elites. Crucial to the proper functioning of pillars at a national level was the lack of direct repression on religious or ideological grounds. By contrast, between 1580 and 1800 denominational diversity implied patronization, toleration, and repression by the state. Acquiescence in, as well as opposition to, the way in which the state attempted to regulate the public sphere through institutional conformity was characteristic of the Old Regime.

Historians today sometimes insist that the Dutch Republic was an experiment in modern statehood, a semi-democratic, tolerant anomaly that foreshadowed certain liberal values.<sup>4</sup> However, as far as religion is concerned, even in the United Provinces state policies were not guided by the notion that diversity was unavoidable or even desirable, but by the conviction that concord was necessary. The existence of various religious sub-cultures was regarded at best as an unforeseen and unfortunate result of the Reformation and the Dutch Revolt. If the Dutch managed to come to terms with the existing

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<sup>4</sup> For one example among many, see Schilling, *Religion, political culture and the emergence of early modern society*.

religious diversity within their borders by developing the policies of toleration for which they would be celebrated, to many contemporaries the lack of concord was an embarrassing fact, a temporary fault in an otherwise effective republican constitution, and one which many hoped would one day be amended. Certainly, church unification was not often openly pursued in the United Provinces,<sup>5</sup> but this was a consequence of the strongly-felt need to keep the religious and social peace in a highly decentralized and complex polity, where power was concentrated at a local level. Toleration was not usually the result of a principled stance on religious diversity as morally superior, or as a desirable public good. The Dutch Republic was an early modern confessional state like any other, with a public church, a dominant clergy, a state protective of certain confessions, and a religious discourse that in many ways presupposed the notion of religious uniformity. Classical statements, like Sallust's *concordia parvae res crescunt* and Livy's *concordiae in civitatibus principes et ordines inter se, & in commune omnes civitates consulerent*, applied explicitly to politics as much as they did implicitly to religion.<sup>6</sup> Of course, the kind of concord that was deemed most desirable was subject to intense debate. In effect, however, much of the Dutch toleration debate of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a debate on the character and limits of religious concord, not on religious plurality as a virtue in itself.

Recently, historians have put greater emphasis on the longevity of the early modern conviction that religious unity reflects, or ought to reflect, a unified polity. They point out that the idea of religious concord persisted in early modern thought until at least the late seventeenth century. It has been argued, for instance, that the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 was already implicit in the way it had been drafted in 1598. From the very beginning, the Edict had been intended as a temporary measure to prevent a conflict no one could win. The Edict was a question of political tactics, and its ultimate aim the reinstatement of confessional unity in France.<sup>7</sup> Around 1700 most thinkers still considered religious unity to be a prerequisite for the continuity and stability of the state, although toleration

<sup>5</sup> As argued in Sepp, 'Irenische pogingen in Nederland aangewend'.

<sup>6</sup> Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, § 10; Livy, *Ab urbe condita* 34, § 49. Dutch insistence on concord also figures in Gabel, 'Toleranz in Theorie und Praxis'.

<sup>7</sup> Turchetti, 'Religious concord and political tolerance'.

could be justified in various ways. Allowances could be made for the freedom of conscience possessed by 'second-rate' citizens who did not adhere to the *exercitium publicum* or *religio dominans*. Licences could be issued to certain sects, tolerating them in order to prevent greater social evils. A unified church could indulge a measure of dissent by introducing fundamental articles. Coercive methods could be imposed indirectly to avoid outright oppression.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, then, few denied the importance of reaching concord in religious matters. The period is rife with colloquies and documents pursuing forms of religious unity that had a direct bearing on the confessional identity of the state.<sup>9</sup> The subsequent processes of institutionalization and confessionalization in early modern Protestantism only increased the desire for unity, although even headstrong Protestant scholastics recognized that concord was not likely to be achieved soon. A common argument was that of the Lutheran theologian Johann Gerhard (1582–1637). He argued that confessional unity was a desirable good that could not always be achieved, that false religions could be tolerated in a state to avoid worse evils, since oppression might endanger the social order, and that the laws and edicts by which other religions were admitted served the *pax politica* but never implied moral *approbatio*.<sup>10</sup> In the Netherlands, too, no established clergyman openly rejected the ideal of politico-religious unanimity.<sup>11</sup> The Dutch Calvinist Gisbert Voet (1589–1676) echoed Gerhard's views in his highly influential *Politica ecclesiastica* (1663–1676).<sup>12</sup> Then there were, of course, the 'irenecists' proper, those who actually sought to reunite the Christian churches, ranging from Erasmus and Bucer to Cassander and Witzel in the sixteenth century, and from Pareus and Junius to Dury and Jurieu in the seventeenth.<sup>13</sup> The pursuit of concord was endemic before 1700. During the eighteenth century the idea of

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<sup>8</sup> Dreitzel, 'Gewissensfreiheit und soziale Ordnung', 5–6; Schultze, 'Concordia, Discordia, Tolerantia'.

<sup>9</sup> Hollerbach, *Das Religionsgespräch*. Müller, *Die religionsgespräche der Reformationszeit*, is an introduction to the major sixteenth-century colloquia in Germany and Poland.

<sup>10</sup> Döring, 'Samuel von Pufendorf and Toleration', 180.

<sup>11</sup> Kaplan, 'Dutch Particularism'.

<sup>12</sup> Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 17–18.

<sup>13</sup> There is a vast literature on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century irenicism. A recent attempt to categorize the various forms of irenicism is Posthumus Meyjes, 'Tolérance et irénisme'.

religious uniformity as the *sine qua non* of the confessional commonwealth was still highly significant.<sup>14</sup> One need think only of eighteenth-century German *Unionsbestrebungen*, including the famous discussions between Leibniz and Bossuet, the unionist policies of Frederick I of Prussia, and the German brand of unionist ‘Gallicanism’ initiated by the bishop of Trier, Nikolaus von Hontheim, in 1763.<sup>15</sup>

Conversely, few advocated religious pluralism on principle. In his highly controversial *Colloquium heptaplomeres* (written in 1587), Jean Bodin had supported the idea that permanent religious diversity was a moral good, but he was an exception to the rule.<sup>16</sup> In the seventeenth century, the number of those who supported principled pluralism may well have been larger, but few openly proclaimed such controversial beliefs. While modern interests and sympathies obviously go out to thinkers like Spinoza and Bayle—the literature on such writers is huge and ever increasing—the majority of seventeenth- and even eighteenth-century writers still favoured some form of religious uniformity over principled diversity. A recent discussion of Leibniz and Bayle has drawn attention to two contradictory politico-religious notions discussed in the decades around 1700. These notions are defined as the idea of the ‘Christian Commonwealth’ and the idea of ‘Civic Diversity’.<sup>17</sup> Each was based on a particular ‘paradigm of political liberty’. Supporters of the idea of a Christian commonwealth argued in favour of the rule *cuius regio, eius religio*, presupposing that religious freedom could be defended only within a state embracing religious unity. Notions concerning the desirability or necessity of religious unity were, however, mitigated by an awareness that religious concord could be achieved only by allowing for a measure of latitude in the established church (i.e. a policy of religious forbearance), or by temporarily suspending its realization through political measures (i.e. by legal toleration). Leibniz is typical of this tradition in that he pursued the unity of the Christian church by compromise and negotiation. By contrast, the proponents of the idea of civic diversity pleaded for religious diversity as a matter of prin-

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Miller, *Defining the common good*, 1–20.

<sup>15</sup> Gericke, *Glaubenszeugnisse und Konfessionspolitik*, 45–52; Aretin, ‘Die Unionsbewegungen des 18. Jahrhunderts’.

<sup>16</sup> Turchetti, ‘Religious concord and political tolerance’, refers to Castelleo as defending religious pluralism in legal terms; this view is disputed in Rotondò, *Europe et Pays-Bas*, 72–73.

<sup>17</sup> Jenkinson, ‘Bayle and Leibniz’.

inciple. Arguing that a religiously plural society was desirable and feasible, they assumed that an impartial ruler who exercised his authority to protect religious minorities best maintained liberty. They disputed the idea that political unity presupposes religious unity, and that an ordered social life necessarily requires a public, 'dominant' or state church to provide the population with religious instruction. Bayle is typical of this tradition in that he concluded that religion was wholly irrelevant to civic virtue, and that anyone had the right publicly to entertain erroneous religious views.<sup>18</sup>

One of the aims of this book is to suggest that the idea of 'civic plurality' (or, as we shall call it, 'religious diversity' or 'religious plurality') began to prevail among articulate people only towards the end of the eighteenth century, and mainly because notions concerning the public status of religion had changed. The persistence of ideals relating to religious concord explains why Bayle's popularity as a theorist of toleration was never very great in the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic, and was easily overshadowed by John Locke. Bayle and Spinoza were generally considered much too radical for public debate. This is not to deny the significance of these thinkers. The point is that their influence was predominantly indirect, or clandestine. If the idea of religious diversity eventually made headway, this was not the immediate result of the radical blueprints of Spinoza or Bayle or their heirs, the French *philosophes*, being put into practice, but a consequence of broadly accepted changes in the politico-religious assumptions underpinning public religion. In this process, radical thinkers certainly served as important catalysts. However, a historical account of this process cannot be limited to such thinkers alone.

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<sup>18</sup> Some scholars have returned to the initial criticism of Bayle's contemporaries by reckoning him among the radical libertines; see Wootton, 'Pierre Bayle, libertine?' Bayle does not figure largely in the present study. It is often claimed that Bayle was very influential (he very probably was), but this has yet to be proved as far as the Dutch are concerned. In Berkvens-Stevelinck, 'La tolérance et l'héritage de P. Bayle en Hollande', 'Holland' in fact means a number of French immigrants; on the latter and their views on Bayle's *Commentaire philosophique*, see espec. Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, 105–127 and *passim*.



## 1.2 THE CONSTRAINTS OF LIBERTY

The present study seeks to outline developments in the early modern intellectual debate on religious liberty, religious toleration, and religious concord, by examining changes in the public status of religion in the eighteenth-century Netherlands.

The early modern Dutch debate on religious toleration involved criticism of the means by which confessional unity was imposed, above all by disputing the obligatory subscription to formularies of faith and defending the liberty to pursue independent scriptural inquiry.<sup>19</sup> The eighteenth century in particular witnessed a fertile intellectual debate on liberty and toleration, with a critical focus on the nature and legitimacy of the so-called ‘dominant’ church. Writers frequently cast doubt on the theological, philosophical and moral legitimacy of obliging citizens to subscribe to certain confessions. By initiating rational debate, they challenged the orthodox doctrines laid down in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century confessions. Commentators often defended the notion that a more or less latitudinarian policy in the established church was an equitable way of maintaining both discipline and liberty. Sometimes they disputed the idea itself of a comprehensive church, as well as the policy of legally tolerating religious minorities outside the established church. Writers could plead for a connection between church and state that was indirect or informal rather than legal and formal. More often than not, critics of the ‘established’, ‘public’ or ‘dominant’ church were themselves convinced of the need for some form of religious uniformity, and vigorously defended the notion of the Christian commonwealth as a political entity requiring such uniformity. However, in the course of the eighteenth century they tended to define Christianity so broadly and freedom of speech so widely, and to diminish the church’s authority to such an extent, that what some of them in fact argued for was a form of religious diversity legitimated only by a very general belief in God. At the same time, the liberty to prophesy was gradually extended to embrace the freedom to philosophize and publicize, as fundamental prerequisites for any plural society. The limited progress made by the idea of the religiously plural society in eighteenth-century discourse can be determined by gauging the extent to

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<sup>19</sup> On confessions and subscription, see Schreiner, ‘Rechtgläubigkeit als “Band der Gesellschaft”’; Schreiner, ‘Juramentum religionis’.

which marginalized beliefs and convictions—Roman Catholicism, anti-Trinitarianism (‘Socinianism’), deism (‘naturalism’), ‘unbelief,’ and ‘atheism’<sup>20</sup>—were perceived as legitimate articulations of inward persuasions, and even socially acceptable. This book is concerned with examining the many forms in which this intellectual debate on concord, liberty, and diversity manifested itself, and how different writers appropriated and variously interpreted certain ideas or groups of ideas.

The debate on religious toleration did not take place in a social and political vacuum, and it would be naive to treat it merely as a high-flown discussion on the moral pros and cons of tolerating, or not tolerating, deviations from the religious norm. The toleration debate was intimately bound up with a fundamental transformation in the parameters governing the nature of ‘publicness’ or ‘publicity’, that is, with the generation of a new concept of the ‘public sphere’ (the untranslatable German term is *Öffentlichkeit*) in the course of the century. The ‘public sphere’ may be conveniently defined as that realm of human activity between, on the one hand, the private mind of the individual (associated with the sacrosanctity of private conscience) and, on the other, the state (associated with the means of coercion and control); the public sphere is the sphere of ‘public opinion’ and ‘public communication’.<sup>21</sup> In brief, this book describes the transition from a ‘confessional public sphere’ to a ‘polite public sphere’, a process that accelerated in the second half of the eighteenth century and, in the Netherlands, was more or less completed by the 1840s. One important reason for this focus on the public is the attempt to bridge the gap between intellectual and religious history on the one hand, and political and social history on the other.<sup>22</sup> This study takes for granted the revisionist approach which attempts to (re-)integrate religious, intellectual and political history, and assumes that ideas have a broadly political relevance.<sup>23</sup> The concept of the

<sup>20</sup> On atheism, see the perceptive treatment in Berti, ‘At the roots of unbelief’.

<sup>21</sup> The main inspiration for scholarship on the ‘public sphere’ is, of course, Habermas, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*; pertinent recent accounts include Laursen, ‘The subversive Kant’; La Vopa, ‘Conceiving a public’; Brewer, ‘This, that and the other’; Laursen, ‘Literatures of publicity’; Redekop, ‘Thomas Abbt and the formation of an Enlightened German “public”’.

<sup>22</sup> For a forceful recent argument in favour of bridging the gap, see Ashcroft, ‘Latitudinarianism and toleration’.

<sup>23</sup> A related approach is Champion, *The pillars of priestcraft shaken*; Champion is concerned to analyze the controversy over deism in terms of, not secular irreligion,

'public' may only be one of several heuristic tools that may be employed to uncover connections between various areas of human experience, but it is a very useful one.

The transition from the confessional to the polite public sphere was connected with fundamental changes in the relations between the individual and the state. Under the Dutch Old Regime, the nature of the public sphere had been delimited and safeguarded by intricate networks characterized by particularism, patronage and privilege, while the power of the state over individual citizens had been diffuse. By contrast, in the political system which developed after the abolition of the Republic in 1795, a centralized, professionalized and bureaucratic state was able to access all citizens directly and uniformly. To function properly, the modern state required articulate and loyal citizens. The basis for social and political stability was found in the formation, through inner civilization (or *Bildung*), of a national, 'polite' community of citizens. This polite religious public, which developed rapidly after about 1760, can be described in terms of a transition from the confessional commonwealth of the Old Regime to the modern nation state. The new public manifested itself in a variety of ways. The most significant are an unprecedented flood of periodicals and other means of publication, the rise of an articulate publishing caste which sought and obtained a public forum for proposals concerning economic, scientific, educational, religious, and literary reform, the development of 'enlightened' sociability, both outwardly (in the form of societies, clubs and associations) and inwardly (as assumptions governing the discourse of 'politeness'), and, finally, the growth of a new political consciousness and a sense of national unity.

The public that developed between about 1760 and 1840 fundamentally transformed the relations between the state, the citizen, and religion. In Peter van Rooden's terms, the central position occupied by the established church in the confessional state was transferred to articulate individuals of an incipient nation state. Central to the new public was the nation, that is, a moral community where religion was primarily localized in the citizens' inner selves rather than in an external, institutionalized hierarchy.<sup>24</sup> The confessional com-

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but 'an attack upon the perceived injustice of the distribution of authority in society' (11). Cf. also Clarke, *English society 1688-1832*.

<sup>24</sup> Van Rooden, *Religieuze regimes*, 17-45.

monwealth had been based on the notion that religious truth is first and foremost established publicly, regardless of whether citizens accept the truth inwardly—although it was obviously better if they did, since this was the ultimate purpose of faith, as the various pietisms and orthodoxies throughout the early modern period emphasized. The point is that in the confessional commonwealth outward acceptance was an absolute requirement, enforceable by sanctions. By contrast, in the polite public, the inward, individual appropriation of religious truth as such began to function as the moral basis of society. Outward conformity became far less important than inward sincerity. In result, the widely held belief that orthodox doctrine and formularies of faith had to be maintained as bulwarks of the confessional commonwealth was transformed into an emphasis on public education, civilization and enlightenment—in short, on the moral development of citizens as ‘polite’ or ‘civilized’ (the Dutch word *beschaafd* can be translated either way) and therefore dependable supporters of the state. What mattered now was above all that articulate citizens were convinced of those basic moral truths that made them trustworthy, reliable, and usable. Doctrinal specifics became irrelevant in respect of the public. Atheism, although still widely considered reprehensible, became tolerable to some extent because it no longer implied an outright, dangerous denial of the bond between confessionalism and the state. It still signalled a desolate spiritual condition, but one that could be amended by instruction and education.

The gradual transformation of the confessional commonwealth into the nation state, and the concomitant changes in the relations between the state, the individual, and religion, did not mean that notions concerning religious concord were dispensed with. What changed was the way in which concord was pursued. As a result of the new focus on inward civilization and the education of individuals, state-sanctioned formularies of faith had become superfluous. To ensure loyalty to the state, citizens had to be allowed to develop their own religious outlook, or otherwise be stimulated to do so. In the polite public sphere, then, religious freedom guaranteed both national allegiance and cultural homogeneity. The critical intellectual discourse on toleration that had been developed and disseminated in the course of the eighteenth century became the ideological basis of the new, polite public. The pursuit of spiritual independence was no longer seen as a subversive aberration, but had become a national character trait. Religious freedom was regarded as a feature epitomized by Protestant

nations in general, and the Dutch nation in particular. The polite public and the idea of the nation state implied that religious uniformity could be achieved, paradoxically, by providing citizens with freedom. Notions concerning religious freedom had to be inculcated through uniform, national education. Such education was by all accounts broadly Protestant in nature; as we shall see, Roman Catholics continued to be seen as anti-national elements even when their religious rights had been legally recognized. Nevertheless, the transformation of the confessional commonwealth into the nation state resulted in the acceptance of a greater measure of religious latitude than before.

By describing the development and dissemination of intellectual discourse on religious toleration, liberty, and concord in terms of the generation of a new religious public, this study seeks to add a new perspective to recent analyses of toleration in the early modern period. The contribution to the burgeoning literature on toleration offered by this study is fourfold.

First, this study attempts to interpret the Old Regime in its own terms—in terms, that is, of the pursuit of religious concord, rather than religious plurality. The pursuit of concord includes institutional attempts to unify a single church or several different confessions, spiritualist or pietist pleas for an invisible church, petitions for a public Christendom based on reason and virtue, and Erastian theories often put forward by political thinkers anxious to preserve civic harmony. Religious concord, in this sense, applies to a whole spectrum of ideas concerned, directly or indirectly, with the attempt to achieve some sort of harmony or agreement or uniformity within one or between several religious groups, and within certain politico-religious contexts. The following chapters do not offer a ‘Whig’ account of the history of toleration, in the sense that they describe the gradual triumph of modern tolerance over the intolerance of the Old Regime. This study assumes that the concept of toleration itself derives its meaning from the specific politico-religious contexts in which it is used or to which it refers. The use of a purely moral definition of toleration, which is still prevalent in many historical accounts, does not lead to a better understanding of either toleration itself or the various historical contexts in which the term has been used.<sup>25</sup> As this

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<sup>25</sup> Van Eijnatten, ‘The eighteenth-century Dutch “toleration” debate.’

study argues, the meaning and function of toleration vary from one period or context to another.

Hence the focus of this study is not necessarily on toleration alone, although the term toleration itself is obviously a useful umbrella concept. Eighteenth-century writers used a variety of terms to describe their aims and intentions, which I have tried to summarize in the three interrelated terms mentioned in the title of this book: toleration, liberty, and concord. *Toleration* refers, on the one hand, to legal measures imposed by the state in edicts and rescripts, and in this sense denotes officially sanctioned ‘licence’ or ‘permission’. On the other hand, toleration may also refer to the New Testament or broadly Christian meaning of the term, in the sense of ‘forbearance’ and related expressions such as ‘patience’, ‘indulgence’, ‘charity’, and so on.<sup>26</sup> In fact, in eighteenth-century discourse, toleration more often than not referred exclusively to religious toleration, and religious toleration usually meant Christian forbearance, that is, the charitable permissiveness exercised towards each other by Christians living in a religiously harmonious society.<sup>27</sup> *Liberty* refers to the various freedoms of prophecy, speech, and publication, all central issues in eighteenth-century critical discourse.<sup>28</sup> *Concord*, finally, refers to the age-old ideal of uniformity or agreement in religious, social, and political matters, which more often than not was regarded as a prerequisite for toleration. Early modern writers were able to draw on a rich vocabulary concerning the idea of toleration, which had developed in the course of the classical and Christian traditions. They used many different, though related, terms, ranging from peace (*vrede*), agreement (*eensgezindheid*), and concord (*eenigheid*) to latitude (*rekkelijkheid*) and moderation (*gematigdheid*), and many others.<sup>29</sup> I have attempted throughout to convey the English sense of the Dutch words used in the sources. Thus, I have frequently translated *verdraagzaamheid* as

<sup>26</sup> See Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 7–21.

<sup>27</sup> Thus the entry for *Verdraagzaamheid* in Noel Chomel and J.A. de Chalmot, *Algemeen huishoudelijk-, natuur-, zedekundig- en konst-woordenboek* [*General dictionary on economy, nature, morality and the arts*] (1768–1777), VII, 3807–3808, explicitly discusses ‘Christian Forbearance’. ‘Ecclesiastical’ and ‘Civil Toleration’ are examined in the article on *Onverdraagzaamheid* (‘Intolerance’), in IV, 2390–2392, basically a collection of aphorisms and classical quotations. Note that the dictionary is an enlarged version of *Dictionnaire oeconomique*, Lyon 1709.

<sup>28</sup> On the concept of ‘liberty’ in the Netherlands, see Haitsma Mulier and Velema eds., *Vrijheid*.

<sup>29</sup> Van Eijnatten, ‘From modesty to mediocrity.’

forbearance rather than toleration. Forbearance suggests the original sense of 'diversity-in-concord' more strongly than does the present-day use of the term toleration.

A second contribution of this study concerns the extension of contemporary analyses of early modern thought on toleration to the end of the eighteenth century. Many students observe that the modern idea of toleration triumphed at some point during the Age of Enlightenment.<sup>30</sup> The general opinion seems to be that the pursuit of Christian reunion, which thrived in the seventeenth century, was definitively ended because of the eighteenth-century emphasis on toleration.<sup>31</sup> True enough, by 1700 religious diversity had become a social reality in most countries, and developments in theology, law, and political and economic theory were already undermining intellectual justifications of confessional uniformity. In addition, the unionist pursuits among the territorial churches of Europe gradually petered out. However, as argued above, the relations between liberty, toleration, and concord are rather more complicated than many analyses imply. 'Concord' and 'toleration' remained intimately related ideas until 1800—and beyond. There is reason enough to suggest that the present study ought to address the period between 1670 and 1840, since this period reflects the flowering and decline of the confessional public sphere as well as the rise and flowering of the polite public. However, essentially the same tale may be told by focusing on the eighteenth century alone, since the major transitions took place during that century. Because it concentrates on highlighting transitions, this study does not address local variations within the Dutch Republic. The general point of view is that of articulate Protestant writers in the main intellectual centres of the Republic (the academies and the towns, especially those in the Province of Holland), simply because these were the writers who, throughout the period in question, were responsible for intellectually defining the religious public in its various forms.

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<sup>30</sup> For the Dutch context: Knappert, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerk*, 68–121; Van der Zijpp, *Geschiedenis der doopsgezinden in Nederland*, 157–191; Zilverberg, 'Van gedulde tot erkende geloofsgemeenschap,' 76–78. For the German context: Schoeps, 'Auf dem Wege zur Glaubensfreiheit', 203–204; Kiesel, 'Problem und Begründung der Toleranz'.

<sup>31</sup> The term 'irenicism' is usually restricted to the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; cf. Posthumus Meyjes, 'Protestants irenisme'. Schmidt, 'Ecumenical activity', in effect concludes with Leibniz at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Thirdly, this study examines minor writers instead of the well-known major thinkers—Spinoza, Locke, Bayle, Voltaire, and so on—usually discussed in books on early modern toleration. Some recent students of the subject have drawn attention to the fact that ideas about toleration developed in many different ways, and at various times and places. Antonio Rotondò has called for a broad analysis of the ideas and practices associated with toleration and irenicism throughout the early modern period.<sup>32</sup> Chris Laursen, commenting on the obsession with ‘liberal’ traditions in anglophone political theory, has pointed out that there is more to the history of toleration than the otherwise admirable contributions of John Locke and John Stuart Mill. There were other English writers besides Locke, and English theorists comprised only a minority in comparison with French, German, Dutch, Swiss, Polish, and other Europeans—and, for that matter, non-Europeans. Nor was toleration necessarily the result of the Enlightenment. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century discourse could draw on a variety of older traditions extending well into the medieval period, when varieties of arguments were adduced in favour of toleration.<sup>33</sup> However, despite this recent emphasis on different approaches to, and different writings on, toleration, few studies have as yet attempted a comprehensive analysis of the groups of minor writers who, to a far greater extent than the major theorists, took care of disseminating ideas and theories, and developed debates on all levels of articulate society. They were the ones to provide numerous expositions of toleration, freedom and concord, writings that, through their wide array and sheer repetitiveness, ensured a broad dissemination of the notions and issues involved.

Specifically in Dutch history writing, notions concerning religious peace, the freedoms of prophecy and inquiry, and ‘unlimited’ toleration have often been regarded as the exclusive territory of dissenters, especially Collegiants, Mennonites and Remonstrants. Most studies on religious toleration in the eighteenth-century Netherlands have

<sup>32</sup> Rotondò, *Europe et Pays-Bas*; Rotondò, ‘Europe et Pays-Bas (. . .)’.

<sup>33</sup> Laursen and Nederman, ‘Difference and dissent: introduction’; Laursen, ‘Introduction’ and ‘Orientation: clarifying the conceptual issues’. For the medieval background, see Bejczy, ‘*Tolerantia*: a medieval concept’. Another recent call to examine the debate on toleration before Locke is J.I. Israel, ‘Toleration in seventeenth-century Dutch and English thought’; Israel, ‘The intellectual debate about toleration in the Dutch Republic’. Enno van Gelder, *Getemperde vrijheid*, Chapter VI, discusses seventeenth-century pamphlets preceding Spinoza, Locke, and Bayle.



been written by church historians, who have established a fixed canon of persecuted individuals. Such individuals include Anthonie van der Os, a Reformed pastor dismissed on doctrinal grounds, Johannes Stinstra, a Mennonite pastor relieved of his office on suspicion of Socinianism, Frederik Adolf van der Marck, a law professor dismissed on account of his Pelagianism, and the French novelist Jean-François Marmontel, whose novel *Bélisaire* was outlawed. The following chapters offer a first *comprehensive* overview of the eighteenth-century toleration debate in the Netherlands. Their subject matter exceeds the established canon by far, and they also give a prominent place to discussions on toleration within the Dutch ‘dominant’ church—the religious heritage of Dutch Calvinism extends beyond the predestinarian doctrine with which it is usually associated.<sup>34</sup> The writers examined in this study vary from radical pietists and natural law scholars to Arminian dissenters and established theologians. These writers fashioned, in effect, the socio-intellectual fabric of the Old Regime, and it is difficult to overestimate their importance.<sup>35</sup> The present study will mention a great many writers and writings; in the short-title bibliography of sources the reader may find a Dutch version of Harald Schultze’s still useful, German *Toleranzschriftum*.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, this book may be seen as an English-language introduction to the intellectual and religious history of the eighteenth-century Netherlands.

Finally, this study is concerned with an intellectual debate in a small country hemmed in between several larger economic, military and cultural powers, notably England, Germany, and France. The Dutch Republic may still have been a major entrepôt of intellectual goods in the first half of the eighteenth century, but it gradually lost this function as the century progressed. In the eyes of foreigners from the larger states (especially eighteenth-century Germans), much of what went on in the Republic seemed deplorably parochial. It is often forgotten, however, that such commentators applied the same kind of criticism to much of what went on in their own countries.

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<sup>34</sup> See espec. Schutte, *Het Calvinistisch Nederland*. Cf. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in eighteenth-century England*, an analysis of the rich intellectual legacy of the Anglican church.

<sup>35</sup> In a sense this study reflects the recent call for a ‘reorientation from intellectual history to the social history of ideas,’ in Oberman, ‘The travail of tolerance’.

<sup>36</sup> Schultze, *Lessings Toleranzbegriff*, 128–172. See the short-title bibliography of sources in the present volume.

As we shall see, the scale of the Dutch literary market meant that the more critical Dutch-language periodicals had little chance of survival. Articulate Dutchmen did frequently scrutinize the foreign critical press—the *Monthly Review*, for example, or the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*. At the same time, the middle-of-the-road literature that characterized Dutch public debate did not differ substantially from the moderate press in larger countries. In other words, the dissemination of ideas related to toleration, liberty and concord in the eighteenth-century Netherlands was interlinked in various ways with similar processes in other countries, where the debate was often just as uncreative or middling—that is to say, just as *public*. The present analysis offers a study in the dissemination of both native and foreign ideas in a rather provincial society, which may have been inhibited in its cultural development by linguistic and demographic factors but was at the same time relatively open to foreign influence through intellectual contacts and a ready market for translations. To underline the international character of the debate, the influence in the Netherlands of books written by minor foreign writers will receive particular attention. This applies above all to German influence, which was enormous but has been much neglected in Dutch historiography, especially since the Second World War.<sup>37</sup> By focusing on the circumscribed research field afforded by developments in a small country like the Netherlands, and by emphasizing the international dimension as well as the role of minor writers, this book provides a case study in what is probably best referred to as cosmopolitan, or trans-national, provincialism.<sup>38</sup> It is this down-to-earth provincialism, perhaps more than the highflown theories and philosophies of major thinkers, which afforded the spiritual basis on which the social ethic of toleration thrived.

### 1.3 THE NEED FOR TOLERATION

For all the endurance exhibited by the idea of religious concord in the Netherlands and elsewhere, it can hardly be denied that the Dutch had a head start in the practical exercise of religious diversity.

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<sup>37</sup> Van Eijnatten, 'German paratexts'.

<sup>38</sup> For a more exclusive focus on Dutch culture in terms of provincialism and nationalism, see Mijnhardt, 'Dutch culture'; Mijnhardt, 'The Dutch Enlightenment'.

The informal coexistence of various confessions was made possible by individual freedom of conscience, a religious sociability practised at grass-roots level, a culture given to debate and civic participation, and ideals of community.<sup>39</sup> On the institutional level, toleration in the United Provinces was a calculated peace watched over by the civil authorities, who were powerful enough to maintain the permissive policies instigated for a variety of reasons, be they economic, political, social, or moral.<sup>40</sup> In legal terms, the situation remained virtually unchanged until 1795, when the Union of Utrecht of 1579, which to all purposes had functioned as the 'constitution' of the Dutch Republic, was abolished and the Batavian Republic established. Article 13 of the Union of Utrecht had guaranteed complete religious freedom to all private citizens (*ieder particulier*) and had left the establishment of the public religion to the discretion of each particular Province.<sup>41</sup> The Union was officially reaffirmed in the wake of the Peace of Westphalia. In the so-called *Naerder Unie* of 1651, a Grand Assembly of the Provinces ratified the following five articles. (1) The Union of Utrecht must be maintained. (2) Each Province is to uphold the 'true Christian Reformed Religion' as confirmed by the Synod of Dort in 1619 and taught in the 'public Churches of these lands'. (3) The (Provincial) authorities must support the Reformed religion. (4) The 'sects and denominations', which are not provided with public protection but are only connived at, are to remain in good order and maintain silence. (5) The edicts against the Papists will remain in force.<sup>42</sup> Within this general legal framework, the civil authorities had leeway to restrain particular religious groups as they saw fit, or simply to refrain from applying existing rescripts in individual cases.

The Dutch debate concerning toleration developed in a context very similar to that of other countries. Though many Dutch dis-

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<sup>39</sup> Frijhoff, 'La tolérance religieuse'; Frijhoff, 'La tolérance sans édit'. Other introductions include Bergsma, 'Church, state and people'; Mout, 'Staat und Calvinismus'. For the earlier period, see Pettegree, 'The politics of toleration'.

<sup>40</sup> An example of a more independent clerical estate, and a consequently less 'tolerant' society, is available in the imperial city of Hamburg; Whaley, *Religious toleration and social change*; Whaley, '*Pouvoir sauer les apparences*'. On the legal status of the majority of early modern dissenters, see also Sägmüller, 'Der Begriff des *exercitium religionis publicum*'.

<sup>41</sup> De Jong, 'Unie en religie'. For the broader context, see Grossman, 'Toleration—*exercitium religionis privatum*'.

<sup>42</sup> *Naerder Unie, geslooten in 's Gravenhage* (1651), 1–2. As we shall see, there was some discussion on the precise interpretation of this text (see section 3.1).

senters hailed the religious freedom enjoyed by their English counterparts, England had its own intolerant laws, ranging from the Act of Uniformity (1662) to the Toleration Act (1689). English dissenters were still excluded from political office unless they attended parish services. Even the objections of more 'tolerant' church leaders regarding the various measures enacted against the dissenters were never unqualified. In England, the ideal of the threefold unity of state, church and nation was particularly strong, and if eighteenth-century dissenters were accommodated in English society with less pressure and harassment, this was a result of *de facto* developments in practice rather than *de jure* changes in government. The same applies to the United Provinces.

Which parties were involved in the Dutch toleration debate? There were two sides to the debate, although actual discussions were often complicated as a result of practical exigencies, government force and influence, and religious and social rifts within the denominations themselves. For the general purpose of this introduction it is, however, instructive to distinguish between supporters of the existing politico-religious order on one hand, and those who criticized it on the other.

In political and intellectual terms, the religious establishment of the eighteenth-century Dutch Republic consisted primarily of the magistracy and the Reformed clergy, and to a lesser extent conservative dissenters.<sup>43</sup> The magistracy's main concern was to preserve the civil order of the Christian commonwealth. One of their main tasks was the maintenance and protection of the Reformed Church. Not all magistrates or *regenten* necessarily favoured Calvinism, though many, if not most, undoubtedly did. However, the threat of religious disorder haunted the minds of all magistrates, including those who lost little or no affection on the Reformed Church. They feared that religious disorder occasioned by trouble within the dominant church or by attacks on its public status were bound to lead to popular rioting, unrest, and even rebellion, or that they would be used by the Stadtholder to reinforce his own position. Prince Maurice had done as much in the conflicts over Arminianism during the first two decades of the seventeenth century. Little alarmed a substantial section of the magistracy more than the potential alliance between the Stadtholder and the mob. Two important circumstances reinforced

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<sup>43</sup> For these conservative dissenters, see especially section 4.4 below.

this fear. Firstly, the Reformed Church formed a considerable part of the Stadtholder's power basis. After Maurice's coup d'état of 1618, the growth of Counter-Remonstrant influence was reflected, not only in a relative strengthening of the position of the nobility, but also in the rise to power of new *regent* families who favoured Calvinism of the variety established at the Synod of Dort. Secondly, the people traditionally looked upon the Stadtholder as the supreme guardian of the Reformed Church. All eighteenth-century *regenten* remembered William III's rise to what they believed to be immoderate princely power through the clamour of the crowd in 1672, when the combined French and English forces threatened to overrun the Republic. History repeated itself in 1747–1748. In the wake of French military attacks, there were disturbances in several Provinces and a popular call for a new administration. These events occasioned the reinstatement of a prince of Orange as Stadtholder over the Provinces. When a Stadtholder or his representatives did wield power, as was the case between 1747 and 1795, magistrates who supported the stadtholderate gained power. Hence much of the political history of the Dutch Republic can be described in terms of the conflict between political factions and political theories that were respectively 'States-oriented' (*staatsgezind*) or 'Orangist' (*prins-* or *oranjegezind*).

Personal convictions or practical considerations apart, the magistrates of the Dutch Republic were bound by law and oath to protect and support the Reformed Church. The Church itself was the dominant, privileged or public church of the Republic. The ratification of its status by the Grand Assembly of 1651 can be seen as a sign of the stabilization of the confessional state in Europe. The Peace of Westphalia (1648) confirmed the provisions of the Peace of Augsburg (1555), and extended them to the Calvinist confessions in the German Empire. In England, the Clarendon Code of 1661–1665 disabled the nonconformists, although the measures were somewhat alleviated in the Toleration Act of 1689. In France, the state was powerful enough to revoke the Edict of Nantes in 1685. In the Netherlands during the second half of the seventeenth century, the state was sufficiently powerful to both support the Reformed Church and enforce the toleration of other denominations. The Reformed Church was not a state church, in the sense that it comprehended, in theory or fact, the population as a whole. It was, nonetheless, a 'public' church. It was the only institution formally permitted to provide for public worship. The magistracy made available church buildings and paid the

ministers' salaries, while only members of the Reformed Church were allowed to exercise public office. Although the church strove to maintain its purity by restricting membership to convinced believers, it took on many of the functions of a state church. Baptismal, marriage and funeral rites, public preaching, and religious education were all provided (though not exclusively) by the Reformed Church. Around 1650, the Reformed comprised roughly 37% of the population. At the end of the eighteenth century about 55% belonged to the Reformed Church. In most Dutch towns, however, the Reformed typically comprised 60–80% of the population.

As any other established priesthood, the Reformed clergy guarded the privileged position of the public church with zeal. They not only wished to maintain its purity by enforcing discipline—in the seventeenth century a strong puritan current within the church (the so-called 'Further Reformation' movement) took this objective most seriously—but also to keep fully intact its public status. In a sense, these aims were contradictory. Spiritual purity and popular accessibility did not go hand in hand. In this respect, the church was in a difficult position, all the more so because sections of the magistracy often tended to favour the idea of a broad and inclusive church. To such a church the orthodox majority of ministers remained adamantly opposed. The Reformed clergy emphasized doctrinal purity, kept a watchful eye on the maintenance of the confessions, and underscored the Calvinist character of the state at every opportunity. At the same time, the church was concerned to keep intact its independent position vis-à-vis the state. In practice, however, the state usually enforced its authority on the church. Calvin's distinction between, rather than separation of, the religious duties of respectively church and state evolved in the Netherlands into a system of close cooperation. Thus, if the church was successful in maintaining its public status, it had to pay the price by accepting submission to the civil authorities. For example, after the Synod of Dort (1618–1619), which laid down the church's doctrinal and organizational guidelines, the authorities prevented the church from holding another national synod. They kept the church organization as decentralized as the Republic itself, allowing synodal deliberations only at the Provincial level. Ecclesiastical disputes were often discontinued by decree, while the magistracy frequently exercised formal influence on the appointment of ministers, if only by refusing to sanction the candidate chosen by the church council. The fact that the organization

of the church was Presbyterian complicated matters, since local factors frequently influenced the clergy's status. Much less clear than established usage and formal rules was the magistracy's informal influence on ecclesiastical affairs. The eighteenth-century Republic was an oligarchic society, in which nepotism and intermarriage were as common as the organization of factions and the use of informal means of communication. The magistracy, or *regent* patriciate, sometimes used church councils to maintain or extend factions, while the church councils themselves were not averse to using their political connections (based on patronage or family) to influence internal ecclesiastical policy. The additional presence of a Stadtholder obscured affairs even more, since members of the church council could invoke various competing secular authorities to have decisions enforced or repealed.

A substantial part of the population of the United Provinces belonged to minority groups, all of which were tolerated to varying degrees by the magistracy.<sup>44</sup> Roman Catholics formed the largest minority, consisting of some 35% of the population in 1700, the greater part of which lived in the so-called Generality Lands (territories in the south of the Republic administered by the seven northern Provinces through the States General). In Holland, but especially in the other Provinces, the percentage of Catholics was substantially smaller. While the Catholic clergy had had to operate carefully and clandestinely during the first half of the seventeenth century, in the main towns of Holland there was increasingly less harassment of priests and Catholic conventicles after about 1650. The toleration enjoyed by Catholics was tentative however, and anti-Catholic sentiment remained widespread, especially among the populace and in Reformed synods and consistories. Until the end of the eighteenth century the Catholics paid a variety of taxes and thinly-disguised bribes, including 'recognition taxes', payments to prevent rescripts from being applied, and obligatory 'gifts' as a welcome to new administrators. The influence exerted by Catholics on Dutch culture and society remained disproportionately low until well into the nineteenth century.

The Protestant dissenters comprised no more than 7 to 8% of the population. Although their numbers declined during the latter half

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<sup>44</sup> For the following, cf. Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 637–676.

of the seventeenth century and throughout the eighteenth, they were of greater importance socially and intellectually than their numbers seem to warrant. Many wealthy citizens and leading intellectuals belonged to the dissenting groups. Lutherans and Remonstrants were relatively numerous in urbanized regions in Holland, while Mennonites were spread all over the country.<sup>45</sup> The Lutherans were the only group of dissenters who increased during the eighteenth century, mainly as a result of immigration from the German lands. By contrast, the Remonstrant and Mennonite groups declined sharply. In 1809, 1.4% of the Dutch population was Mennonite, while only 0.18% was Remonstrant. In spite of these small numbers, the dissenting voice was prominent. The Remonstrants had never been lacking in self-confidence, and, barring exceptions, the Remonstrant intellectual community never really resigned itself to Calvinist church-state domination. Hence, the Remonstrants or Arminians will figure largely in this book. The Mennonites form another interesting group. Scholars of religious history have often emphasized the Mennonite rejection of secular power, which generally resulted in an attitude of aloofness towards the state. After the disastrous attempt to establish the Kingdom of Zion at Münster in the 1530s, the Mennonites (or 'Anabaptists', or 'Baptists') no longer rejected the state as such. They simply kept their distance from the secular world. However, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, force of circumstance often resulted in cooperation between the Mennonites and the magistracy. It was difficult to remain aloof in times of distress, when the population was expected to make substantial sacrifices. Few Mennonites actually took up arms, but the group as a whole made extensive financial contributions to the war effort. In Friesland alone, they paid more than a million guilders between 1672 and 1676, which ironically resulted in their being qualified as 'Lovers of the True Reformed religion'.<sup>46</sup> The knowledge that the magistracy and the public church partly owed their dominant position to Mennonite wealth certainly boosted Mennonite self-esteem. The Dutch Lutheran community was spiritually and intellectually akin to the Reformed. Thus, the Lutherans

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<sup>45</sup> On the Lutherans: Loosjes, *Geschiedenis der Luthersche kerk*. On the Remonstrants: Hoenderdaal and Luca eds., *Staat in de vrijheid*. On the Mennonites: Van der Zijpp, *Geschiedenis der doopsgezinden*; Groenveld *et al.*, eds., *Wederdopers, menisten, doopsgezinden*; Hamilton *et al.*, eds., *From martyr to muppy*.

<sup>46</sup> Van der Zijpp, *Geschiedenis der doopsgezinden*, 145-148; also Kuipers, 'In de wereld, maar niet van de wereld.'



similarly had to contend with disputes over orthodox pietism and rational theology, even leading to a schism in the Amsterdam Lutheran church in 1791.

While there were few specifically Jewish contributions to the toleration debate, there was, of course, a debate on the toleration of Jews as a religious minority. In early modern discourse, the Jews were looked upon as an altogether distinct category of deviant believers, often tolerable (in the original sense of 'sufferable') where dissenters of Christian provenance were not. In addition, from the eighteenth century until well into the modern period Jews were subject, more than Christian dissenters were, to condescension and denigration. Unless they deigned to consider conversion to Christianity, or figured in eschatologies, Jews were emphatically excluded from designs concerning religious concord.<sup>47</sup> Consequently, an analysis of the debate on the toleration of Jews *as Jews* is outside the scope of this book.<sup>48</sup>

Eighteenth-century opposition to church-state domination was to be found particularly but not exclusively among Protestant dissenting minorities. Especially in the second half of the eighteenth century, a growing number of Reformed intellectuals, including ministers and theologians, took a more critical stance towards the privileged position of the public church. Possibly the same may be said of Roman Catholics. However, it is important to keep in mind that the minorities themselves were divided internally into conservative and less conservative camps. The distinction between 'establishment' and 'dissent' does not necessarily correspond to the distinction between the Reformed and the other Protestant minorities. Some representatives of dissenting minorities were perfectly content with their subordinate position, and some Reformed clergymen critical of their established status. More often than not, criticism of the public church took on the form of anticlerical sentiment. Again, eighteenth-century Dutch anticlericalism did not differ from anticlericalism in other Protestant countries. Anticlericalism was not an attack on the clergy as such, but an attack on the relatively independent status of the

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<sup>47</sup> In an essay included in the *Verhandelingen, uitgegeven door het Zeeuwsch Genootschap der Wetenschappen te Vlissingen*, Middelburg 1786, vol. XI, the Reformed divine Petrus Nieuwland argued that a Jewish-Christian synod seemed a good idea; his intentions were not to start a dialogue on equal footing, but to convert the rabbis to Christianity.

<sup>48</sup> The reader is referred to Huussen, 'De joden in Nederland'; Michman, *The history of Dutch Jewry*.

public church (or its attempt to procure autonomy) as well as on the authority exercised by its clergy on politico-religious issues.<sup>49</sup> Critics of clerical autonomy, whether in England, Germany or the United Provinces, habitually feared the establishment of an independent ecclesiastical hierarchy. Did hierarchical authority in the church not go hand in hand with despotism in politics? Terms such as *geestelijken* (best translated simply as ‘clergy’) and the somewhat more derogatory *kerkelijken* (related to the French *ecclésiastiques*) and *hierarchie* were commonly used in the Dutch toleration debate. Conversely, the Reformed clergy usually referred to themselves as *leraren* or ‘teachers’.

It may be helpful to take note of a number of historical ‘facts’. Many of the minor authors discussed in the following were academics, and frequent references will be made to the Dutch universities. There were theological, law and medical faculties at Leiden, Utrecht, Groningen, Franeker, and Harderwijk, but several smaller towns also possessed academies for ‘higher’ education, such as Deventer, Dordrecht, Middelburg, and above all Amsterdam (the *Athenaeum*). Since Dutch political and social history is notoriously complex, important events and situations will be described very briefly as we go along.<sup>50</sup> Arguably, one of the most important episodes in eighteenth-century Dutch history was the so-called *Patriottentijd* (literally the ‘time of the Patriots’). It refers to an episode of seething political debate and activity between 1780 and 1787, on the threshold of the French Revolution. Indeed, in Utrecht, among other towns, there occurred a revolution of sorts. The 1780s witnessed heated discussions on the true nature of republican constitutions and on democracy and representation, a spectacular development of the political press, and the establishment of armed civic guards. Those who sought to change (or, as was often the case, reinstate) the ‘original’ constitution of 1579, were generally called ‘Patriots’—spelled with a capital letter to distinguish them from ‘patriots’ in the usual sense. In 1787, however, the Patriot revolution was put down by Prussian troops who came to the help of the Stadtholder, Willem V. This inaugurated a short-lived restoration, which ended when French forces invaded the Republic and helped install the wholly revised administrative system

<sup>49</sup> Schilling, ‘Afkeer van domineesheerschappij’; Van Eijnatten, ‘Swiss anticlericalism’.

<sup>50</sup> Excellent introductions are Leeb, *The ideological origins*; Jacob and Mijnhardt, *The Dutch Republic*; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*.

of the so-called 'Batavian Republic.' One significant feature of the new state was the formal separation of church and state in 1796.

Each chapter of this book discusses a different aspect of the eighteenth-century Dutch toleration debate. Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 begin by focusing on the confessional public sphere, but also describe the emergence of the polite public; chapters 6 and 7 concentrate more specifically on the polite public as such. Chapters 2 and 3 are concerned with the Reformed clergy's contributions to the toleration debate, and discusses the confessional public sphere from several different points of view, ranging from radical pietism to conservative unionism. The dissenters are discussed in Chapter 4. Included are accounts of Arminian views on toleration, the influence of English and Swiss writings, the Mennonite contribution to the debate, and the rather problematic position of Roman Catholicism. Chapter 5 deals with the role accorded to religious liberty in political, philosophical, and juridical thought. Among other topics, this chapter discusses republican political theory, popular Spinozism, utopian ideals, the contributions of natural law scholars, and developments in politico-religious thought during the two final decades of the eighteenth century. The broadly theological basis of the polite religious public is analyzed in Chapter 6. The various sections are mainly concerned with the Dutch response to contemporary foreign writers, particularly Germans. Chapter 7 is concerned with values of the polite religious public on the one hand, and with the means used to disseminate them on the other. Topics discussed include sociability and the press, an emphasis on reasonableness and piety, and educational ideals. A short introduction precedes each chapter. An Epilogue, finally, attempts to recapitulate this outline of the eighteenth-century Dutch toleration debate by examining contemporary usage of the terms 'civilization' and 'enlightenment'. A brief summary of the contents of the study as a whole follows the epilogue.

Finally, several points must be made concerning the source and reference material used for this book. Part of the printed source material is no longer extant in libraries. In these cases, extensive reviews in contemporary periodicals have been employed instead; the periodicals themselves will be introduced more fully in section 7.2. Because the chapters which follow discuss a large number of writings, the following apparatus has been used to reduce the size of footnotes to a minimum. (1) In the footnotes, only short titles of source material are mentioned, followed by date of publication.

(2) The source material referred to in the footnotes may be found in the short-title bibliography. (3) Titles of originally Dutch sources have been translated into English; if they are not mentioned in the main text, translations can be found between square brackets directly after the Dutch title. (4) The original (non-Dutch) titles of translated writings are followed only by the date of publication, unless they have been used as source material. (5) Dutch translations of foreign sources are preceded by *D.tr.* ('Dutch translation'); 'tr. by' means 'translated by'. (6) The footnotes contain only short titles of secondary literature; full titles can be found in the bibliography; note that references to secondary literature in Dutch have been kept to a minimum. (7) Series (including periodicals) have been abbreviated throughout; full titles may be found under 'abbreviations'. (8) Sources of biographical information are not mentioned. Practically all biographical details can be found in the microfiche collection published by K.G. Saur Verlag,<sup>51</sup> including the *British Biographical Archive*, the *Deutsches Biographisches Archiv*, and the *Biografisch Archief van de Benelux*. Biblical quotations are from the Authorized Version.

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<sup>51</sup> München, New York, London, Paris.



CHAPTER TWO  
CONTAINING SECTS

INTRODUCTION: THE CONFSSIONAL PUBLIC SPHERE

The Calvinist church in the Dutch Republic may have been less intertwined with the state and less centralized than other official churches in Protestant countries, but otherwise it functioned as any other established church. It had developed systematic expositions of dogma to teach the people the Word of God, and applied polemic or ‘elenctic’ theology to its defence. Under the aegis of state authority it had instituted a series of monitoring agencies and defence mechanisms to protect the truth. These included theological faculties at various academies, a stern educational scheme for future ministers of the Word, a well-organized system of church councils, classes and provincial synods to keep a watchful eye on the maintenance of discipline and orthodoxy both within and without the church, compulsory approbations for the publication of theological writings, and so on. It obliged ecclesiastical officials to subscribe to the so-called ‘formularies of concord’, the Belgic Confession of 1561, the Heidelberg Catechism of 1563, and the *Canones* of Dort of 1619.<sup>1</sup> It upheld a complex network of formal and informal ties with the political administration, ties that were sanctioned in constitutional documents like the Union of Utrecht, institutionalized in officials like the political commissioners, who represented the state at synodal meetings, and extended informally by family and friendship bonds with reigning magistrates. Like any other established church, the Calvinist church, in conjunction with the magistracy, used these and other means to maintain the confessional public sphere. That is, they upheld a public qualified by confessional rules, controlled by a clerical estate, backed by political power, and extending itself in time and space by tending and superintending congregations, and by avoiding, controlling,

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<sup>1</sup> For a broad historical outline of the contents, cf. Rohls, *Theologie reformierter Bekenntnisschriften*; see also Van den Berg, ‘The Synod of Dort’.

suppressing, or eradicating heterodoxy and other social and religious deviations from its domain.<sup>2</sup>

Like any other established church, the Dutch Calvinist church could prove remarkably flexible. It often preferred to control religious deviants by exacting from them the promise ‘not to go public’, rather than expel them from communion altogether. But there were boundaries that could not be overstepped, and the church frequently used its imposing system of checks and controls to guarantee the religious quality of the public sphere. The present chapter seeks to demonstrate the successful maintenance of an authoritarian public sphere in the early eighteenth-century Netherlands. How did the church, as represented by the clergy, attempt to preserve the religious quality of the public domain? Which arguments did it put forward in the public debate on toleration to legitimate its claims? In the sections that follow the functions of the confessional public sphere will be examined from the point of view of early eighteenth-century separatism. First, an account of the debate on internal ecclesiastical concord (2.1) serves to illustrate the spiritual conditions that ideally had to be met to maintain the confessional public sphere in good order. Subsequently an outline of the response to radical pietists (2.2), Moravians or Herrnhuters (2.3), and Reformed separatists (2.4) will show that the early eighteenth-century confessional public sphere was quite successful in preserving its identity.

## 2.1 PEACE IN SALEM

A good portion of Christian irenicist writings was not published with aims we would now call ‘ecumenical’. Many were written to further unity in a single established church. However, the arguments put forward in such writings did not differ significantly from those adduced in ecumenical writings proper. To put it another way, early modern irenicism, whether inter- or infraconfessional, was inextricably connected with attempts to buttress the confessional commonwealth.

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<sup>2</sup> For the theological background, cf. Muller, *Post-reformation Reformed dogmatics*. The orthodox Calvinist position on the authority of synods was basically that of Gisbert Voet, who affirmed the right of the general synod to establish doctrines, ceremonies and a church order; Bouwman, *Voetius over het gezag der synoden*. For a case study of the communication processes involved in the defence of orthodoxy, see Gierl, *Pietismus und Aufklärung*.

A case in point is Edward Stillingfleet's *Irenicum, a weapon-salve for the churches wounds* (1659), a plea by an authoritative clergyman arguing for uniformity in the Church of England, a 'comprehension' of Anglicans and nonconformists that would discipline the latter by exacting conformity.<sup>3</sup> Similar discussions on the need to maintain internal ecclesiastical concord cropped up regularly in the Netherlands. Treatises on the subject had been written during the Arminian troubles in the first two decades of the seventeenth century. However, the most authoritative book, for the eighteenth-century clergy, stemmed from the later seventeenth century, when divines had begun to apply the irenical argument to the Voetian-Cocceian conflicts. This section is devoted to *Salem's peace* by Salomon van Til.

In the seventeenth-century Dutch Reformed Church, internal conflict resulted mostly from the emergence of various theological camps, whose members recognized the authority of the official formularies and church organization. Following nineteenth-century church historians, Jan van den Berg has distinguished between three orthodox theological traditions in the latter half of the century.<sup>4</sup> The first was the so-called *theologia traditiva*, rooted in sixteenth-century Calvinism as represented by, among others, Theodore Beza. Divines belonging to this school included Samuel Maresius and the Frederik Spanheims, father and son. These theologians distanced themselves from the puritan rigor pursued by some of their contemporaries, tended to allow for a certain degree of government influence on the church, and valued the Episcopal church organization of Anglicans and Lutherans. The second school comprised the Voetians, who, following the erudite theologian Gisbert Voet (1589–1676), strongly emphasized ecclesiastical independence, as well as puritan morality and pietistic faith experience, within a scholastic theological framework based on Aristotle. In the wake of the Cartesian influence on Dutch Reformed theology around the middle of the century, the Voetian school more or less absorbed the *theologia traditiva*. The third school was the Cocceian one, which favoured an anti-scholastic approach to divinity, stressed the federal nature of God's relations with man, and showed a profound interest in the history of salvation. Many Cocceians (but certainly not all) were also strongly influenced by Cartesian philosophy, probably because it represented a viable alternative to Aristotelianism, which

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<sup>3</sup> Carroll, *The common-sense philosophy of religion of Bishop Edward Stillingfleet*, 18–22.

<sup>4</sup> Van den Berg, 'Het stroomlandschap van de Gereformeerde Kerk', 16–21.



was then strongly entrenched in the Dutch academies. The Cocceians derived their name from Johannes Cocceius (1609–1669), who worked out a dynamic theology focusing on developments in the divine economy of the Old and New Testaments. The distinction between the Voetians and the Cocceians was also a social one, in the sense that each party formed theological factions in the church, which in turn were often directly connected with certain social and political groups. The Cocceians tended to be oriented more to the republican States and the Voetians more to the semi-monarchical Orangists. This combination of religion and politics was potentially an explosive one, as contemporaries realized.<sup>5</sup>

During the hefty internecine conflicts of the second half of the seventeenth century, irenical voices had regularly cried out, calling for unity between Voetian and Cocceian brethren.<sup>6</sup> Particularly after 1672 and the reinstatement of the stadtholderate under William III, when the power of the Orangist party was on the rise and there were rumours of plans to eradicate Cocceianism from the public church altogether, divines issued irenical works. Johannes à Marck (1656–1731), the last major academic to produce a complete exposition of doctrine in Voetian vein, inaugurated at Groningen in 1682 with an address *De concordia inter theologos stabilienda*—which did not prevent him from attacking a Cocceian colleague soon after on account of his supposed heterodoxy. The personification of domestic Reformed irenicism was, however, Herman Witsius (1636–1708), whose mediating stance is characterized by his own theology. As a Voetian, he developed a theology that drew strongly on Cocceian federalism, although he rejected Cartesian philosophy out of hand. ‘O that all would think and speak alike’, he once said, voicing the central spiritual ethic of the confessional public sphere. Witsius characteristically considered the formularies of concord as the bonds of ecclesiastical unity, the touchstone of orthodoxy and the main bulwark against heresy. *Libertas prophetandi* should not extend beyond the limits set by the formularies, although it is also true that Christians know only one teacher, Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup> Witsius’ personal device, which was regularly hailed in the eighteenth century, was the golden maxim,

<sup>5</sup> See section 3.4 below.

<sup>6</sup> *Consensus veritatis* (1659) and *Theologia pacifica* (1671) by the Cartesian divine Christophorus Wittichius (1625–1687) were characteristic tracts.

<sup>7</sup> Van Genderen, *Herman Witsius*, 225–229.

‘in necessariis unitatem custodiant, in non necessariis libertatem, in utrisque prudentiam et charitatem, in omnibus conscientiam inoffensam in diem Domini.’<sup>8</sup>

The most solid and influential orthodox treatise dealing exclusively with domestic church harmony was Van Til’s *Salem’s peace, served in love, loyalty, and truth* (1678). Although Van Til has been portrayed as a harbinger of the ‘Dutch Enlightenment,’<sup>9</sup> his book may serve as an illustration of the way in which the problem of ecclesiastical discord was confronted by confessional divines. There were no basic changes to the orthodox argument until the end of the eighteenth century, and Van Til’s recommendations were applicable to any theological conflict. Salomon van Til (1643–1713) was one of the leading Cocceian theologians of his time, having studied in Leiden under Cocceius himself. He worked as a professor at the *Illustre School* at Dordrecht before becoming professor of theology at the Leiden Academy. As a second-generation Cocceian who esteemed Cartesianism as a philosophical system, Van Til epitomized the Cocceian penchant for rational apologetic, writing treatises against ‘atheists’ and showing certain appreciation for natural theology. *Salem’s peace* (1678) went through a third edition in 1698, and was still a well-known book in the early eighteenth century.<sup>10</sup> ‘Hic liber aureus plane est, dignusque, ut ab omnibus Protestantibus legatur,’ said one fan, ‘propter aureas ad pacem et concordiam tendentes regulas, in eo contentas.’<sup>11</sup> It remained true to its Cocceian background by making some allowances for *libertas prophetandi* and doctrinal development, but for all its irenicism, the book is an exemplary defence of the confessional public sphere. In his foreword, Van Til emphasizes the importance of both the clergy and the magistracy in the fulfilment of Isa. 60:17 (‘I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness’). If the magistracy is righteous, the state and the church will certainly flourish. But the church will bloom more fully when its officers are peaceful and willing to accept each other. To encourage ecclesiastical peace, the ‘ground maxim’ of Christ’s Kingdom

<sup>8</sup> He first used the maxim in his address *De praestantia veritatis evangelicae* (1680), and embroidered on the theme in his *Theologus modestus* (1698); Van Genderen, *Herman Witsius*, 67–68, 91–93; Van Eijnatten, ‘From modesty to mediocrity.’

<sup>9</sup> Van den Berg, ‘Toch een wegbereider?’

<sup>10</sup> S. van Til, *Salems vrede* (1698; 1st ed. 1678); one of the laudatory poems is by Balthasar Bekker.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Schotel, *Dordrecht II*, 27 note.

must be respected. According to this maxim, peace should not be disrupted or the unity of the church destroyed if the differences at issue are not fundamental. The fundamental doctrine (*grond-Leere*) is summarized in the three formularies of unity, which are not subject to change, since it has been shown after much study that they contain the truth. Those who do not accept them, like Socinians, Papists, Pelagians and Jews, err greatly; not so, however, adherents to the Cocceian system.<sup>12</sup>

*Salem's peace*, then, was an attempt to convince the clergy not to apply the formidable truth-preserving apparatus of the Reformed Church to the Cocceians, and simultaneously outlined the conditions for maintaining a confessional public sphere. The book is divided into two parts. The first part considers the nature, conditions and means of ecclesiastical peace, while the second discusses in detail the various, and in Van Til's view non-fundamental, theological differences between Cocceians and Voetians. The first part of the book is the more theoretical and contains six chapters. Van Til began in Cocceian vein by observing that the Hebrew feasts of the seventh month mentioned in Lev. 23, such as the Feast of the Tabernacle, are a perfect antitype of the reign of grace during the New Testament.<sup>13</sup> For instance, the branches of palm trees symbolize the articles of the faith, which are used by the Church as a sign of her triumph over error and ignorance. Similarly, the olive branches (the 'goodly trees' of Lev. 23:40) represent that mild and tranquil spirit which encourages peace and quiet among brothers by its moderation, no less than it opposes adversaries of the truth by its bravery. Religious peace, Van Til defined, is a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), consisting of moderation and satisfaction among brotherly souls who differ in thought or action. Peace is a result of divine favour, as 2 Cor. 13:11 makes clear, and the daughter of charity. Mildness, politeness and goodwill cause the community of saints to flourish, leading to spiritual tranquillity as well as an orderly and unbreakable union within the ecclesiastical body. Recognizing this, those without the fold will realize that such unity is an indubitable sign of the divine presence, which will draw them to the true church.

The main prerequisite for ecclesiastical peace is the full recogni-

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<sup>12</sup> Van Til, 'Voor-reden', in: *Salems vrede*, \*4<sup>r</sup>-\*4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Van Til, *Salems vrede*, 1-7.

tion of fundamentals, as Van Til set out in his second chapter.<sup>14</sup> If there is agreement with regard to basic doctrines, the precise implications and interpretations of all other points of faith ought to be suspended, pending the revelations which it will behove God to bestow upon future researchers (Phil. 4:15–16; Van Til was obviously thinking of theologians like Cocceius). A peaceful Christian is required to overlook certain misunderstandings when he realizes that they do not undermine the fundamentals. Differences between brothers are unavoidable. The reasons for this are man's exposure to sin, error and ignorance, due to which it is impossible to expound the Bible in complete clarity; the unequal distribution of talent; the enormous breadth and sweep of the Scriptures, which cannot be encompassed or understood by one man and necessarily lead to certain emphases among certain groups in certain periods of time; and the unfathomableness of parts of the sacred text, which in itself is a sign of God's wisdom but also enjoins humility on man. Fundamentals, the articles necessary to salvation and comprising the essence of faith, must be distinguished from non-fundamentals, the articles that merely strengthen faith and help to further a believer's spiritual serenity and confidence. It has always been a maxim of the evangelical church to restrict non-fundamental differences to humble discussions and the exercise of brotherly charity.<sup>15</sup> Openness and willingness to recognize the foundation of faith as the basis for true brotherhood has always characterized the Reformed, in contrast to the 'schismatic Lutheran spirit.' Calvin, 'that brave and serious defender of proper doctrine', had not rejected Lutheranism during his sojourn at Strasburg between 1538 and 1541. This applies also to the 'Honoured Divines' of the Synod of Dort, who counselled that distinctions should be made between the provable and the less provable, and added that peace was unobtainable without modesty. Thus the Reformed are characterized by their adherence to the rule, 'Diversum sentire duos de rebus iisdem, incolumi licuit semper amicitia'. Van Til added that the English church is exemplary in this, and referred to two moderate Anglican divines, Edward Reynolds (1599–1676) and Nehemiah Rogers (1593–1660). Both were valued by the Voetian party.

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<sup>14</sup> Van Til, *Salems vrede*, 8–16.

<sup>15</sup> Van Til refers to Pareus' *Irenicum* as well as a work by his teacher at Utrecht, Frans Burman.

Acknowledging fundamentals is, then, the main prerequisite for attaining peace in Salem. What are the means to achieve this end? Van Til devoted chapter three to a discussion of modesty.<sup>16</sup> He defined this as a mild reasonableness of the mind, which caused a person when interacting with his neighbour to proceed reasonably rather than promote differences. In order to please his brother rather than offend him, to make advances rather than induce aversion, and to bind him through benevolence, he will not be sharp, meticulous, precise or scrupulous, but moderate (*rekkelijk*, that is, allowing for latitude) and indulgent. Lack of Christian modesty is attributable to thoughtlessness, ignorance or general human weakness. Modesty and latitude are a sure way to peace. As the eloquent Counter-Remonstrant Johan de Brune Sr. (1588–1658) had stated: ‘Those who cannot indulge other men are themselves insufficiently human.’<sup>17</sup> Mutual forbearance or *mutua tolerantia Christianorum*, the subject of the fourth chapter, continues this line of argument. Van Til characterized this as a humble mildness in tolerating and forbearing opinions of lesser significance but divergent from our own. It requires that friendship and peace be maintained through self-control, and presupposes that we be aware of the imperfections of our own understanding and acknowledge our fallibility.<sup>18</sup> Mutual forbearance implies freedom of prophesy, which is the topic of the fifth chapter.<sup>19</sup> Since forbearance must necessarily be mutual, no party can deny the other the right to prophesy. Van Til quoted amply from Voet’s *Selectae disputationes theologicae*. A man (that is, a formally established theologian or minister) is free to put forward his divergent views publicly in the academy, orally or in writing, and he may openly declare his sentiments

<sup>16</sup> Van Til, *Salems vrede*, 17–21.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. J. de Brune, *De grond-steenen van een vaste regeringe* [*The founding stones of a firm government*] (1621); the booklet deals mainly with the relations between church and state. De Brune was a high-ranking *regent* with marked Counter-Remonstrant sympathies who wrote on law, politics and theology. De Brune’s puritan leanings would have appealed to the Voetians, as Van Til well knew; see Op ’t Hof, ‘De godsdiestige ligging van De Brune’.

<sup>18</sup> At this point Van Til refers to the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matth. 13:24–30): the tares must be tolerated, for they may still take a likeness to the wheat; Van Til, *Salems vrede*, 21–22. Van Til’s reading differs from the commentary of the official States Translation, which explains that the tares are the hypocrites and evildoers who will always be present among the faithful (*Statenuvertaling*, marginal note 27 at Matth. 13:30). On the exegesis of Matth. 13, cf. Bainton, ‘The parable of the tares’.

<sup>19</sup> Van Til, *Salems vrede*, 22–28.

to the congregation. Freedom of prophecy is necessary because there is uncertainty with regard to the truth, because the truth may be discovered by contradicting error, and because a denial of this freedom will lead to torments of conscience. Honoured and learned men have shown that freedom of prophecy furthers scholarship. Of course, Van Til did not intend to make out a case for 'immoderate liberty'. Fundamentals cannot be denied. Non-fundamental articles, 'revealed by God through enlightened men, and deliberately endorsed in legal Synods,' may not be rejected freely in writing or from the pulpit, since they have been accepted as truth and the formularies containing them have been formally subscribed to. On the other hand, while they serve as the basis for church unity, it is not necessary to follow the confessions right down to the last detail.

In the sixth and final chapter Van Til discussed the obstacles to ecclesiastical peace.<sup>20</sup> Such obstacles include the misapprehension of each other's vocabulary and rhetoric, as well as false appreciations of each other's aims and activities. 'Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love', as Rom. 12:10 says. Interestingly, Van Til referred to *The Dutch interest in procuring ecclesiastical peace* (1664), a small book with a remarkably irenic message, printed pseudonymously during a conflict between Orangist Voetians and the republican magistracy. The author was an unimpeachable puritan, Willem Saldenus (1627–1694), of whom Van Til approved highly. Discussing the various means of eliminating and avoiding misunderstandings in the church, Saldenus mentioned 'general' means (such as peace with God, a spirit of forgiveness, modest and friendly conversation, and prayer), and 'particular' means (prudent government policy, self-control among the clergy, respect for Christian freedom, and the help of foreign Calvinists and members of other churches).<sup>21</sup> Surprisingly for an orthodox Calvinist, Saldenus cited, among others, Calixt, Grotius, Acontius, Erasmus, the ideologist of States-oriented republicanism Johan de la Court, and ended his book with a quote from the Erastian Huguenot Louis du Moulin (1607–1680).<sup>22</sup> Saldenus

<sup>20</sup> Van Til, *Salems vrede*, 28–40.

<sup>21</sup> Willem Saldenus, [as Gelasius Mullens, an anagram for 'Willem Saldenus'], *Neerlands interest, tot vrede der kercke* (1664).

<sup>22</sup> The title *Neerlands interest* should be seen as a response to Pieter de la Court's republican *Interest van Holland* (1662). On Saldenus, see Van den End, *Guiljelmus Saldenus*, 176–188. On Du Moulin, see Kretzer, *Calvinismus und französische Monarchie im 17. Jahrhundert*, 187.

belonged to the puritan movement spearheaded by the Voetians, but did not subscribe to the Voetian position regarding the restricted authority of the magistracy in ecclesiastical matters. His views on the relations between church and state may have furthered Van Til's interest in Saldenus, since Cocceians tended to approve of greater government influence in ecclesiastical matters. After all, who could obstruct the persecution of Cocceians by the Voetians but the magistracy? For all its pleas for variations in theological method and doctrine, *Salem's peace* was characteristic of the confessional public sphere in that it sought doctrinal unanimity in the church as a vital precondition to concord in the public domain, in that it drew on traditional notions concerning 'forbearance' and 'moderation' to ensure a limited measure of latitude, and in that it appealed to the magistracy to use its means of coercion to enforce confessional allegiance.

William III died in 1702, and in the early decades of the eighteenth century, powerful Cocceian factions closely affiliated to urban centres of political power developed in the church, while the Voetians became a distinct minority. Although the theological controversies between the Voetians and the Cocceians slowly disappeared, the social and ecclesiastical significance of the distinction remained. For example, there is evidence to show that in the Zeeland town of Middelburg, *regent* families with Cocceian leanings maintained their position at the top of the social hierarchy, whereas the status of Voetian families declined.<sup>23</sup> As for the theological differences, there was one final, posthumous attempt to reconcile the two currents in 1738. This time the irenicist in question was a Voetian arguing from a minority position; the tables had turned. Johannes Mauritius Mommers (1654–1737) was a benevolent minister with an impressive record as a pastor in the Province of Gelderland. From the point of view of the toleration debate, his *Eubulus, or good advice* was obsolete before it was published, and the main reason for its appearance seems to have been the respect commanded by the aged author.<sup>24</sup> Mommers tried to settle the issue by returning to what was osten-

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<sup>23</sup> Van der Bijl, 'De tweedracht van voetianen en coccejnen in politiek perspectief', 89.

<sup>24</sup> J.M. Mommers, *Eubulus, of goede raadt, om de verschillende broederen, de zo genaamde Voetianen en Coccejnen, met malkanderen te bevredigen* [*Eubulus, or good advice to bring mutual satisfaction to disagreeing brothers, the so-called Voetians and Cocceians*] (1738).

sibly the source of the conflict, namely Cocceius. In short, he attempted to demonstrate that the so-called Cocceians were at variance with Cocceius himself, particularly with regard to their sympathy for Cartesian philosophy. If Mommers convinced his Voetian brethren, he certainly failed to win over any Cocceians. The latter, moreover, were no longer a uniform group. What demands our attention now is the fact that after the Voetian-Cocceian conflicts had peaked, a new wolf in sheep's clothing began to cause internal discord in the Reformed Church: pietism. It was above all to the menace of pietism that traditional arguments concerning internal ecclesiastical concord were applied during the first half of the eighteenth century.

## 2.2 PIETIST DEVIANTS

There had been 'pietists' of all sorts in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, but as was the case elsewhere in Europe, they had begun to attract more attention than ever in the early eighteenth century. The radical pietists discussed in this section are important in any overview of the eighteenth-century toleration debate precisely because their arguments and actions prove the existence of a confessional public sphere. The ideological defenders of this public sphere, notably the clergy, were at pains to preserve religious truth as an outward presence in society. In their view, the maintenance of truth as a public reality was a precondition to converting and disciplining the people. Pietists turned the matter round. They claimed that inward conversion was a prerequisite for establishing any truth, and hence they undermined the stability of the religious order. This chapter examines the criticism of the confessional public sphere voiced by three groups of 'pietists'—Hebrews, Hattemists, and Behmenists—as well as the public church's response.

The Hebrews had never intended to found a new sect.<sup>25</sup> The movement emanated from conventicles within the Reformed Church, and members considered themselves perfectly Reformed. In fact, these laymen claimed to be the *true* Reformed, to be more authentically Calvinist than the clergy. The Hebrews deemed one doctrine central to Christendom: the satisfaction of Christ. This doctrine they

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<sup>25</sup> On the Hebrews, see Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 17–35.



avowed to teach their neighbours, whom they also sought to instruct in Hebrew so that each could read the original text of the Bible for himself, and, frequently, herself. The Hebrews were known also as *Schoristen*, after Jacob Verschoor (1648–1700), the lay preacher who is generally regarded as the founder of the movement. They not only aspired to free the original biblical text from the claims laid upon it by official clergy. They also believed that women should be at liberty to prophesy and preach. As if this was not subversive enough, they showed a disregard for the doctrinal system accepted by the public church. What was the use of learning a series of abstruse dogmas without insight into the true marrow of divinity?

In concentrating almost exclusively on the satisfaction of Christ, the Hebrews laid themselves bare to accusations of antinomianism. Their message, which they claimed to derive from Sunday 7 (on faith) of the Heidelberg Catechism, was the simple assertion that a sinner who believed in Christ was justified by faith and saved for all eternity. There was no need to pray for forgiveness; moreover, God could not be angered by the trespasses of true believers, for they had already been fully forgiven. They denied the need for penance and repentance, claiming that the elect could no longer be lost. Instead, they charged the clergy with Papism, since ministers, as mouthpieces of an orderly society, emphasized the law at the cost of justification by faith. Of course, the clergy recoiled from such antinomian views and tried to silence the Hebrews. The defence mechanisms of the confessional public sphere were set in motion. Theologians wrote books against antinomianism,<sup>26</sup> church councils issued warnings, and the civil authorities, albeit grudgingly, published rescripts. The Hebrews were accused of disseminating blasphemy and error, slandering the Reformed Church, despising public worship, and subverting morality. They undermined the truth, the clergy warned, as well as the social order. Indeed, the anticlericalism of the Hebrews was pronounced. They rejected the clergy's status, stating that their spiritual power was a matter not of divine institution but merely a question of church order, and even that independent clerical authority contradicted the constitution of the free Netherlands.<sup>27</sup>

Although the Hebrew movement originated in the 1670s and had

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. J. Hulsius, *De hedendaagsche antinomiënerie* [*Present-day antinomianism*] (1696, 1738).

<sup>27</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 24.

climaxed in Zeeland and Holland during the 1690s, a number of pamphlets first printed around 1700 were published again in 1731.<sup>28</sup> As late as 1760, the Hebrews' essential orthodoxy was defended in an anonymous essay on the meaning of the term 'antinomianism'.<sup>29</sup> The author noted expressly that his intentions were to establish religious peace, and that his essay, following Witsius, should be regarded as an *Irenicum*. This was an allusion to Witsius' *Conciliatory, or irenical animadversions on the controversies agitated in Britain under the unhappy names of antinomians and neonomians*, which had appeared in Latin in 1696.<sup>30</sup> Witsius had been concerned solely with English neonomians and antinomians, who had asked him to give his opinion in the matter. He had tried to mediate, advocating the use of biblical terms to avoid disputes over words. The anonymous author's reference to Witsius testifies to the latter's stature as the orthodox irenicist *par excellence*. Like Witsius before him, the author deplored the terms of abuse both parties threw at one another in discussing the temporal relation between justification and faith. 'Papists, Arminians, Pelagians, Neonomians' (who regarded justification as a result of faith) opposed 'Antinomians, Hebrews, Schoristen' (who put justification before faith). Citing various authorities, including impeccable Reformers such as Calvin, Melanchthon, Musculus, Olevianus, and Ursinus, he argued that the Hebrews' opinion on the nature of faith and justification was perfectly legitimate.

No less popular than the Hebrews were the so-called 'Hattemists'. Most traditional accounts of the founder Pontiaan van Hattem (1641–1706) are based on an exposé by a theology professor from Bremen, Theodor Hase (Hasaeus, 1682–1731), published in a learned journal in 1729.<sup>31</sup> Hase, who reputedly owned the largest library at Bremen, probably wanted to show his German audience that the Dutch, too, had their pietist troubles. His account testifies to the interest of German writers in Dutch heretics, and it was still consulted

<sup>28</sup> *Verzameling van werkjes van d' Hr. Jacob Verschoor en eenige zijner discipelen* (1731).

<sup>29</sup> 'Theophilus van Heber', *Verhandeling over den naam van antinomianen, en antinomianery* (1760).

<sup>30</sup> H. Witsius, *Animadversiones irenicae* (1696); also included in Witsius, *Miscellanorum sacrorum libri*, II (eds. in 1700, 1712, 1736); the English title is that of the Glasgow 1807 translation. The Dutch translation appeared as *Vredelievende aanmerkingen*, Amsterdam 1754, in the wake of the altercation surrounding Comrie and Holtius (see below), and accompanied by a foreword by Wilhelm Peiffers.

<sup>31</sup> T. Hase, 'De nupera Schoristarum et Hattemistarum in Belgo secta'.

in the later eighteenth century. When Pontiaan van Hattem had become a minister in Zeeland in 1672, he seems to have fulfilled his duties conscientiously.<sup>32</sup> In 1680, however, he was accused of heterodoxy and ultimately removed from office in 1683. Several months later he left for Bergen op Zoom, where he established himself as a so-called *oefenaar* or 'exerciser', the non-ordained religious leader of a conventicle. In Bergen, Van Hattem attended to a small but loyal flock of adherents, which included uneducated people (a hatter, for example) as well as leading burgers (such as the director of the town orphanage). The local clergy regarded Van Hattem as a danger to the church and tried to have him expelled or otherwise silenced. They feared that his 'holding in public of harmful conventicles' would lead to the dissemination of 'pernicious poison'. Their anxiety was heightened by the claims of the *oefenaar* that he had held discussions with 'various gentlemen of high standing, both political and ecclesiastical persons' in Holland, who, moreover, approved of his views.<sup>33</sup> The magistracy of Bergen, however, refused to comply with the wishes of the clergy, and Van Hattem continued to live in the town until his death.

The letters, essays and explanations written by Van Hattem for his adherents were collected by his friends and published posthumously by Jacob Roggeveen (1659–1729) in four volumes as *The fall of the world's idol, or the saints' faith triumphant over the doctrine of self-justification*.<sup>34</sup> A searcher for truth, Roggeveen had been a notary in Middelburg before accepting a government position in the East Indies between 1706 and 1714. In 1721 and 1722, he led an unsuccessful expedition of the West Indian Company to the South Sea. Before he left the Republic in 1706, Roggeveen had been suspected of both the Hattemist heresy and political agitation—illustrating the fact that the risky pursuit of religious freedom was sometimes connected with the even more hazardous pursuit of political liberty.<sup>35</sup> In April 1714, the Middelburg church council again accused Roggeveen of defending man's passivity and inability to obey the law. The interesting point about Roggeveen is that he was apparently well versed in Spinoza, and that before becoming acquainted with Van Hattem's ideas he

<sup>32</sup> The following is based on Van Manen, 'Pontiaan van Hattem'.

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Van Manen, 'Pontiaan van Hattem', 410.

<sup>34</sup> P. van Hattem, *Den val van 's werelts af-god* (1718–1727).

<sup>35</sup> M. van der Bijl, *Idee en interest*, 81–82; Borsius, 'Mr. Jacob Roggeveen'.

had held 'naturalistic' views. Early eighteenth-century antinomianism was often associated with Spinozism and libertinism. Van Hattem himself was not a Spinozist, however. He summarized his own views as follows. Men are driven by self-love, and the 'public Pulpits' foster this destructive tendency. Men seek themselves instead of recognizing that they have already been sought and found by Christ. The 'public Pulpits' seldom enjoin upon believers that Christ has already found them. They amplify man's unthankfulness, arguing that an express and heartfelt acknowledgement of the love of God is unnecessary; they emphasize the burden of the Law rather than the spiritual liberation afforded by grace. A true believer, by contrast, cannot doubt that the yoke of servitude has been lifted, for God himself makes this clear to him. He will have a thankful and joyful heart and express his gratitude to God, free from all self-love. Van Hattem did not envision an easy life for Christians. In his view, believers had to possess far more knowledge concerning salvation than the average clergyman was able or prepared to give them.

According to Van Hattem, unthankfulness has given rise to the many schisms in Christianity. If believers recognize their liberation from the Law, strife and discord will disappear and the divisions within Christianity will be healed. There will be no Papists and no Protestants; there will be only God's children, who love each other as brothers.<sup>36</sup> A witness of conversion need not change his denomination, since it is his faith and not his confession that converts him. Let him remain where he is! In the eyes of the clergy this was, of course, a paradoxical claim. Van Hattem wished to retain the various denominations but refused to acknowledge the ecclesiastical discipline which held them together. He could only be an enthusiast who endangered the stability of the confessional public sphere by putting private opinions before public truth. Characteristically, Van Hattem believed that he and his followers possessed a deeper knowledge of Holy Scripture than did the clergy. He alleged that God had given him special thoughts so that he was able to interpret more fully the old confessional truth. He claimed that he progressed steadily

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<sup>36</sup> Van Hattem, *Den val van 's werelts af-god*, IV, 730–734. Cf. also Borsius, 'Mr. Jacob Roggeveen', 311–312: Van Hattem seeks to turn people into Christians, regardless of their being Papist, Mennonite, Socinian, Arminian, Lutheran or Reformed. Also 243 note, where Van Hattem poses the question, 'By which means can divided Christianity be unified?', and provides the simple answer: 'Leave every Christian free in his own understanding'.

in his search for religious truth. He argued that the ability to elucidate salvific truth was closely linked with spiritual regeneration. God clarified matters to him daily, he contended, and thus he found it difficult to write down his views for once and for all. Van Hattem was variously accused of being an atheist, an unbeliever, a deceiver, a mocker of God, a libertine, a Cabbalist, and a Spinozist. One of the Zeeland towns with a substantial Hattemist following (which resorted under the protection of a burgomaster) was even called 'a refuge and a hotbed of wicked, irreligious and Atheistic Libertines'.<sup>37</sup> It did not help that Van Hattem's style was excessively obscure and, to say the least, dangerously imprudent. The commission that examined the first volume of *The fall of the world's idol* in 1718 did not have to search long for statements such as,

Caiaphas is presented to us as the head of Ecclesiastical authority, just as Pilate, on the other hand, is presented as the head of the Political Government; by this God's Son teaches us that, because he meant to be condemned by both of them, nobody can justify himself unless he has first denied all authority [*credyt*] of the clergy and of the political Authorities in Religious matters.

Van Hattem could hardly have expected that his claim, to the effect that 'For a long time now I have regarded the large number of articles of faith (. . .) as a wile of the Satan,' would evoke much sympathy.<sup>38</sup>

The Hattemists at Bergen op Zoom were left in peace until the shoemaker Marinus Booms († 1728) established himself there in 1714.<sup>39</sup> Booms had just been excommunicated from the Reformed Church at Middelburg on account of his obstinate adherence to 'Spinozist' and 'Hattemist' heresies. He eventually left Bergen, but soon enough a friend of his, Steven Kloet (an 'infamous blasphemer' who claimed that the Bible could just as well be thrown on the bonfire since true believers possessed the word within them), turned up to begin conventicles there. In 1719 the authorities of Bergen finally forbade these conventicles. Hattemism was officially

<sup>37</sup> Borsius, 'Mr. Jacob Roggeveen', 298.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in Borsius, 'Mr. Jacob Roggeveen', 311, 325–326. A similar virulent attack on the godlessness and tyranny of the public clergy in 'Innocentius Devotus', *Antwoort aan den heer Jacob Ferdinand Davervelt [Answer to (. . .)]* (1733).

<sup>39</sup> On Booms, see Wybrands, 'Marinus Adriaensz. Booms'; Wielema, 'Spinoza in Zeeland'.

condemned by an edict of the States of Holland as late as 1732, followed a year later by an edict of the States General, forbidding the teaching and dissemination through conventicles, meetings or in any other way, of the 'wicked sentiments' of the Hattemists.<sup>40</sup> The magistracy may have been more willing than the church to tolerate pietistic dissent in the margins of the confessional public sphere, but the point is that, in the end, the religious identity of the public domain was preserved intact.

Another pietist deviant who should be mentioned, apart from Verschoor, Van Hattem, and Booms, is Jacob Bril (1639–1700). If anything, he was a mystic of the kind one usually associates with Germany. Indeed, at least eight of his writings were translated into German between 1719 and 1734, to the consternation of the German clergy.<sup>41</sup> Bril's thought is a curious instance of mysticism of the Jacob Boehme variety, whose influence on Dutch culture has still to be examined. There were Behmenist currents in the Netherlands since the latter half of the seventeenth century, if mainly among German-speaking immigrants. The well-known mystic Johann Georg Gichtel (1638–1710), who published a collected issue of Boehme's works in 1682, attracted a following at Amsterdam.<sup>42</sup> Other German pietists also frequented the Republic. The pietist, philosopher and alchemist Johann Conrad Dippel (1673–1734) stayed there between 1707 and 1714, taking a doctorate in medicine at Leiden. As late as the 1730s, the German pietist Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702–1782) was in contact with these Behmenists.

As the title page indicates, the collected works of the 'enlightened' Jacob Bril, 'most useful and serviceable to all denominations', were published by his adherents in 1705.<sup>43</sup> Bril was dedicated to the revival of the universal church. The editor remarked succinctly that no-one objected if a person happened to reject one or several Christian sects, but to reject *all* of them, as Bril did, was regarded as a highly suspicious act. Bril recognized no outward church, but only the hearts of all the saints in whom lived Christ Jesus. He had progressed in enlightenment more than many other people. His writings bespoke

<sup>40</sup> Van Manen, 'Pontiaan van Hattem', 425–429.

<sup>41</sup> Schröder, "... Spinozam tota armenta in Belgio sequi ducem", 160.

<sup>42</sup> Gorceix, *Johann Georg Gichtel*, 28–29; Zaepernick, 'Johann Georg Gichtels und seiner Nachfolger Briefwechsel mit den Hallischen Pietisten', 83–89.

<sup>43</sup> J. Bril, *De werken* (1705).

his approach to the source of truth, and his pious thoughts could be used to heal the divisions in Christendom. The highest wisdom, claimed Bril himself in his essay 'The way to peace', is the mystical sense of nothingness that is in Jesus Christ. Bril spoke of 'melting' reason into the heart, and outward confession into inward love, and generally presented his readers with a profound Behmenist metaphysics we need not delve into here. His general point seems to have been that mutual charity and Christian peace will ultimately result from the truth we possess inwardly and which proves itself by mere conviction. Christian sects always try to prove each other wrong, but truth cannot be proven; it has to prove itself. Bril pacifically rejected confessions, rational theology, outward ceremonies and ecclesiastical and worldly benefits. Denying all charges of rebelliousness, he enjoined Christians to remain within their own denominations since it was quite irrelevant to which one in particular they adhered.<sup>44</sup> An adamant chiliast, Bril called upon all Christians to enter the spiritual world of truth, peace and concord. The attempt outwardly to maintain religious truth by means of academic theology, confessions, formularies, synods, catechisms, and so on, was not merely ineffectual, but even harmful to the true Church of Christ.<sup>45</sup>

By criticizing the way believers were called upon from 'public pulpits' to examine their own salvific state in continuing doubt, radical pietists on the outward fringes of the church distanced themselves especially from Voetian divines, who themselves exhibited a 'pietist' inclination towards introspection. An interesting point is that the leaders of these sectarian movements often originated in Cocceian quarters. Bril's religious career would have been familiar to the heresy-hunters of his time, particularly those who sought to unmask hidden Spinozists. He was educated as a Voetian catechizer, converted to Cocceianism, and ultimately sought recourse in mystical theology. The Hebrews, most of whom seem to have been Cocceians, objected most of all to Voetian predestinarian piety. Gosuinus van Buytendijk was a Cocceian minister removed from office in 1712 because of his Hattemist sympathies. Having become an itinerant lay preacher, he was banished from one town after another and in

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<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, as his predecessor in the pursuit of Christian unity, Bril mentions Coornhert, of whose writings 'a number of tomes can still be obtained cheaply.' On Coornhert, see also section 6.3.

<sup>45</sup> A similar point of view in Conrad Dippel [as Christianus Democritus], *Fatum fatuum* (1709), 227–328 ('One shepherd and one flock').

1746 was reported to be living in Altona, that tolerant haven near Hamburg.

Irenical or not, the pietist deviants discussed in this section frontally attacked the public domain guarded by the established clergy. They took the universal priesthood of believers so seriously as to make the established clergy redundant; they developed a religious outlook that verged on antinomianism, ignoring the institutional church; and they organized conventicles beyond the reach of ecclesiastical control. Hattemism had been relatively tolerable in the first decades of the century, if only because some high-ranking officials favoured the movement. However, it was not fortuitous that Hattemism was outlawed in 1732. Pietism was still on the rise, and the guardians of the confessional public sphere had become more powerful than ever. In the next section we shall examine a fourth pietist threat, next to the Hebrews, the Hattemists, and the Behmenists, to the early eighteenth-century public church.

### 2.3 ZINZENDORF'S ITINERARY

The way the Calvinist church functioned as any other established church seeking control of the public domain is perhaps best illustrated by the clergy's successful campaign against the Moravians.<sup>46</sup> The guardians of Calvinist Zion effectively suppressed Zinzendorf's ideal of an ecumenical 'heart religion'. The case of the Moravians illustrates the significance of personal commitment in the spread of pietist ideals, but at the same time indicates that such individual dedication could only have some measure of success on the fringes of a properly functioning confessional public sphere. This was true of charismatic conventicle leaders as much as it was of persons of rank and wealth. In this section we shall look at the public church's response to the Moravians or Herrnhuters, from the point of view of Zinzendorf's travels through, and contacts in, the United Provinces. When Zinzendorf visited the Netherlands in March and April 1736, he met with high-ranking officials in Amsterdam, including a burgo-master and the *Geheimrat* to the Prussian king.<sup>47</sup> He later travelled to

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<sup>46</sup> Lütjeharms, *Het philadelphisch-oecumenisch streven*, 150; Evenhuis, *Ook dat was Amsterdam*, 152–182.

<sup>47</sup> Peucker, 's *Heerendijk*, 34.



Leeuwarden, where he held intimate discussions with Marie Louise, Princess of Orange. These contacts eventually led to the founding of a Herrnhuter colony at IJsselstein, financed by Jacob Schellinger (1706–1769), a wealthy Mennonite. In 1746 another rich Dutchman bought land at Zeist, where the Moravians established a second community. For all his lobbying, however, Zinzendorf never managed to have the Moravian movement formally legalized.

It seems significant that the Dutch admirers of Zinzendorf overlapped with a small circle of friends who corresponded with the German pietist poet Gerhard Tersteegen (1697–1769).<sup>48</sup> Generally deploring the lack of true spiritual life in the Netherlands, Tersteegen also found warm supporters there, such as Catharina van Vollenhoven (1721–1804), the daughter of a wealthy Rotterdam trader who maintained connections with pietists in the Rhine, Ruhr and Wuppertal areas. Born in Moers in Northwest Germany, a territory belonging to the House of Orange before it devolved to Prussia in 1702, Tersteegen was versatile in the Dutch language. The many letters he wrote are marked by an intense religiosity. Tersteegen's correspondents included the elderly Adriaan Pauw (1672–1745), a scion of a foremost regent family in Amsterdam who also attended meetings organized by Zinzendorf.<sup>49</sup> Jacob Schellinger, too, had contacts with both Tersteegen and Zinzendorf. Another kindred spirit was Johannes Henricus Schrader (1701–1787) from Bentheim, who had studied at Leiden and later became Marie Louise's court preacher at Leeuwarden. Strongly attracted to both Tersteegen and Zinzendorf, Schrader translated Jean de Labadie's *Manuel de piété* into German, and was regarded by contemporary Frisians as a leader of 'mystics'.

Thus, both Tersteegen and Zinzendorf contacted Mennonites and a small number of Calvinists. Most of the latter either stood outside the public life of the church or were able to remain within it because of their social prestige. Although Zinzendorf befriended men of wealth and consequence in the Netherlands, they were not representative of the religious establishment. This conclusion is borne out by other devotees, who even as dissenters can hardly be said to have kept to the beaten track. Zinzendorf noted in his diary that Geertruid Beuning

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<sup>48</sup> Van An del, *Gerhard Tersteegen*; Van An del, 'Gerhard Tersteegen en zijn Nederlandse vrienden'.

<sup>49</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 92.

(1681–1744), a prosperous Mennonite widow who sympathized with the Moravian cause, had Labadist sympathies.<sup>50</sup> The count's eldest daughter, Benigna, played with the children of Cornelis van den Bosch (died 1758), a *regent* at the Collegiant Orphanage in Amsterdam—an institute with a reputation for both piety and Socinianism. Also greatly appreciated by Zinzendorf was Jan Berends van Calkar (1696–1773), a Dutchman who had joined the Swiss Mennonite congregation in Groningen. The count's private commentary on the religious sensitivity of this 'Bartmann' (Swiss Mennonites specialized in impressive beards) would not have fostered much sympathy among the Calvinist clergy: 'Wenn er von den Wunden Jesu spricht', he wrote, 'so schmilzt er'.<sup>51</sup> Such remarks were as suspect as Zinzendorf's willingness to enter into theological discussion with the Hattemists. He conversed with Dina Jans, a leading Hattemist of the time, who, however, 'plauderte so viel, so stolz und so neben der Schrifft vorbei' that their dialogue ended prematurely.<sup>52</sup> Nor were the count's Reformed friends more representative of the religious establishment. The Calvinist minister Hieronymus van Alphen (1700–1758) was perhaps an exception, but his wife (a personal friend of Marie Louise), was, as Zinzendorf observed, 'eine ernstliche Schwester, ein wenig mit der Mystique und den Principiis des Gerte Terstege ergeben'—and, added the count, also plagued by her reason, but fortunately 'durch die evangelische Gnade der Brüder in der Einfalt geweckt'. Another Reformed minister who strongly sympathized with the Moravians was Franco de Bruin (1690–1763). Little is known about this 'auserwehlt Knecht des Herrn'<sup>53</sup> who led the *Brüdergemeine* in Amsterdam in 1738, but was forced by the church to sever all contacts in 1741. Another Reformed follower of Zinzendorf was an extremely wealthy intimate of Tersteegen, Maria d'Orville (1704–1755), again the progeny of a leading family. According to the count, she was 'eine der Religion nach ganz geseperirete Schwester'.

The few supporters who held official positions in the politico-religious establishment either kept quiet or were effectively silenced. Zinzendorf found his most distinguished supporter when he travelled

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<sup>50</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium'; the following is largely based on this diary and Peucker's commentary.

<sup>51</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 94.

<sup>52</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 98.

<sup>53</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 91. Van An del, *Gerhard Tersteegen*, 73 note, observes that Van Alphen himself had also befriended Tersteegen.

north to Leeuwarden. There he was received by Marie Louise of Hesse-Kassel (1688–1765), Princess of Orange and baroness of IJsselstein, the widow of the Frisian Stadtholder Johan Willem Friso (who had died in 1711), and the mother of the future Stadtholder William IV.<sup>54</sup> The princess expressed great interest in Zinzendorf, but worried about what her son would say. Zinzendorf had already called on the young Prince of Orange and his mother Marie Louise during his *Bildungsreise* through Germany, Holland, France and Switzerland in 1719 and 1720. After his later visit in 1736, Marie Louise began to exchange letters with the count, in abominable French; she proved to be an important if impotent ally. Marie Louise, or ‘Aunt Marijke’ as she went down in Frisian history, later offered a group of Moravians refuge in her barony. The princess was a god-fearing woman who believed it her duty to provide shelter to persecuted Protestants fleeing the Habsburg menace. Her son, however, who was biding his time in expectation of being appointed to the Holland stadtholderate, had advised against providing refuge for a group of believers who had evidently already caused civil unrest in Saxony. Despite William IV’s objections, Marie Louise gave the Moravians permission to settle in her barony of IJsselstein. Although Zinzendorf repeatedly sought her to do so, she never gave her permission public status. The princess had little choice. Open support for the Moravians would have implied opposition to the Holland magistracy. Zinzendorf’s condemnation at the Synod of Marienborn (1744) of Marie Louise’s stance as ‘unobrigkeitlich’ reflects the incomprehension of a German nobleman faced with the complexity of Dutch politics. Negotiations with the States General to obtain formal toleration for the *Brüdergemeinde* began in 1742, although the request was later tuned down to the liberty, on behalf of the Moravian community, to pursue missionary activities. Both demands were rejected out of hand by the Reformed synods and, in the face of the government’s unwillingness to pursue the matter, all attempts at legalization came to nothing.

What had disturbed the authorities in Amsterdam in 1736 was not the spiritual solace that the count was apparently able to administer to high-ranking if slightly eccentric citizens. What caused anx-

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<sup>54</sup> For the following, see Smits, ‘Zinzendorf en Maria Louise van Oranje’; Jagtenberg, *Marijke Meu*, 153–157; Peucker, ‘s *Heerendijk*, 145–149; Schutte, *Oranje in de achttiende eeuw*, 23–32.

iety was the possibility of Zinzendorf gaining support among broader sections of the populace and causing social unrest. The kind of people who could become all too confident as a result of the religious meetings organized by the count included the two soul-mates who accompanied Maria d'Orville wherever she went. The count himself clearly disapproved of them:

ein Paar Weibspersonen, die sehr viel sprechen und disputiren, von den sogenannten feinen Reformirten, d.i. was man bei uns Pietisten nennt, aber sie leben geehrt und hoch angesehen und machen ihr Werck zu sprechen als ein Prediger und alle von den Religionen in Amsterdam durchzurichten, um mit der dortigen lieben Gewissen Freyheit ein wenig zu balanciren.<sup>55</sup>

Zinzendorf was later invited by these 'feinen Reformirten' to attend one of their meetings. He tried to keep aloof since he found their debates to be 'sehr hoch und weitläuffig', but was enjoined by them to discuss several scriptural passages. He was unable to convince them—Dutch Reformed pietists were notoriously self-conscious even then—and went home in a turbulent state of mind.<sup>56</sup> Zinzendorf's presence caused some unrest in town. Several Amsterdam *regenten* were even concerned that he was an instrument in the ambitious hand of the Prince of Orange, sent to incite the populace. Their qualms were not lessened by the fact that Zinzendorf's friend Hieronymus van Alphen had been the court preacher in Leeuwarden and was known for his Orangist sympathies. Nor would suspicions have been alleviated if it had become known that Zinzendorf used these meetings to speak, among other things, 'über den Meinungs-, über den Misbrauch der Religionsfreyheit und wie sie alle evangelische Religion annehmen müsten'.<sup>57</sup> Several Reformed ministers were sent by the magistracy to monitor and inspect the goings-on at the count's house. The Lutheran pastors, who already had their own pietists to contend with, regarded him as a threat, and according to the count they deliberately misinformed both the magistrates and their congregations about Herrnhuter activity. When Van Alphen heard that

<sup>55</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 83.

<sup>56</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 98–99. Later in his diary Zinzendorf also relates his experiences with the 'fijnen' in Groningen. 'Sie sind gelehrt, reden gern viel und disputieren noch lieber. (. . .) Sie kommen geschwind ins Feuer, hören nichts aus, und da kan man in wenigen Stunden viel Kezereyen imputirt kriegen.'

<sup>57</sup> On Zinzendorf's own views on toleration, see Nielsen, *Der Toleranzgedanke bei Zinzendorf*.

Zinzendorf intended to preach in the Lutheran church, he immediately went to the count to dissuade him from doing so. Zinzendorf's reputation was harmed anyway when on 29 March 1736 a large and vociferous crowd assembled before his house in order to hear him preach. He was forced to calm down the people, and although eventually the crowd dispersed, the damage was done. 'Ich sahe woll', concluded Zinzendorf, 'das der Feind [the devil] mit meiner Amsterdamer Arbeit nicht zufrieden war und freuete mich.'<sup>58</sup>

After these events, Zinzendorf travelled to the stadtholderly court at Leeuwarden via Groningen, reading Anna Maria Schuurman's *Eukleria* (1685) on the way.<sup>59</sup> In Groningen he met Anthonius Gottfried Dreas (1710–1766), a Lutheran preacher who had been in office for only several months. Dreas was a 'Jenaischer Bruder', a member of a group of pietists at Jena who maintained relations with the Herrnhuters. Zinzendorf judged him young, timid and imprudent. Indeed, Dreas was soon the centre of controversy because of his pietist indifference to religious distinctions, while the local Lutheran congregation was reprimanded by its powerful Amsterdam consistory for having allowed Zinzendorf to preach. Incidentally, Zinzendorf was well-received by the Groningen theology professor Cornelis van Velzen (1696–1752), a Voetian. Another minister personifying the kind of people who felt attracted to Zinzendorf was the Calvinist minister Johannes Hofstede (1685–1736), an aged man of Voetian inclination overjoyed to meet so distinguished a labourer in the Lord's vineyard before he expired (which he did, five weeks later).<sup>60</sup>

The man who first brought the Moravians to public attention was Isaac Le Long (1683–1762). Le Long was a German-born translator and bibliophile of Huguenot extraction, who came to the Netherlands early in life.<sup>61</sup> His sympathies are above all evidenced by his translations of writings by the German Reformed pietist Friedrich Adolph Lampe (1683–1729), whose Cocceian leanings he shared. But his religious interests ranged beyond Calvinist pietism. He befriended Tersteegen<sup>62</sup> and the Herrnhuters immediately aroused his interest.

<sup>58</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 93, 102–104.

<sup>59</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 105; A.M. Schuurman, *Eukleria seu melioris partis electio pars secunda*, 1685; cf. De Baar, *Choosing the better part*.

<sup>60</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 106–110.

<sup>61</sup> De Bruin, 'Isaac le Long (1683–1762)'.

<sup>62</sup> Van Andel ed., *Gerhard Tersteegen. Briefe*, 239, on 'our friend Le Long' (letter by Tersteegen to A. Pauw, 1737).

His church council criticized the hospitality he and his wife showed towards the Herrnhuters at his home, but he nonetheless joined the brotherhood in 1741, living in the Herrnhuter colony at Marienborn (Wetterau) in the 1740s. As early as 1735 he had expressed his sympathy for the Moravians by publishing a book containing an outline of their history. *God's wonders with his Church*,<sup>63</sup> dedicated to Zinzendorf, was much read. In 1738 the second impression was announced in the *Boekzaal*, a major clerical periodical, where the Herrnhuters were actually praised as an exemplary Christian congregation of unequalled stature.

Despite his many reservations about the Dutch, Zinzendorf believed that respect for the blood of the lamb was widespread in the Republic, and that people were fed up with distinctions and dissension.<sup>64</sup> However, his optimism was as unfounded as his knowledge of the Dutch establishment was limited. If the people were hungry for spiritual nourishment, the public church (represented above all by the South Holland Synod, which was celebrated for both its orthodoxy and its watchfulness) was not convinced that devotion of the Moravian variety ought to satisfy them. The clergy was worried by reports concerning Zinzendorf's beliefs, such as the possibility that everybody, including devils, could attain salvation; his view that religious ceremonies were purely external, resulting in his dubious habit of temporarily joining the dominant faith of the country in which he happened to be; and his outspoken conviction that predestination was a damnable doctrine.<sup>65</sup> A spokesman for the Amsterdam clergy, Gerard Kulenkamp (1700–1789), wrote a *Pastoral and fatherly letter*, which was published in December 1738 after a delay caused by the Amsterdam magistrate withholding its permission.<sup>66</sup> A committee delegated by the South Holland Synod went to visit the Moravian community, only to learn that it had no confessions to be examined. This, of course, further nurtured the suspicion that the Herrnhuters held doctrines that could not stand the light of day. The refusal or rather inability of the Moravians to present themselves as a circumscribed church was at odds with the standard policy of toleration of most European states of the early eighteenth century. Thus,

<sup>63</sup> I. le Long, *Godts wonderen met zyne kerke* (1735).

<sup>64</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 106.

<sup>65</sup> Loosjes, 'De ontvangst der Herrnhutters'; Peucker, 's *Heerendijk*, 135–138.

<sup>66</sup> *Herderlyke en vaderlyke brief* (1738).

as long as they did not make clear what, exactly, they stood for, and could thus legally appeal to the one or the other edict or custom, the Moravians could not be permitted to operate in the Republic. They could be outlawed because they did not publicly demonstrate the beliefs to which they adhered, and, to make matters worse, further intruded into the public domain of the church by actively calling upon members of the Reformed Church to join their fold. The Herrnhuters tried to disseminate their soul-corrupting errors by artful tricks and ambiguous words, argued at length François Kuypers (c. 1691–1783), a typical Reformed minister. It is impossible to ascertain whether this new sect was, indeed, ‘a remnant of that old Bohemian Brotherhood, and as such members of either our church or the Lutherans; or whether they belong to the Papists, the Remonstrants, the Quakers, the Enthusiasts, the Pietists or the Mystics, or to any other more or less known but errant denomination.’<sup>67</sup>

At Amsterdam in 1739, Herrnhuter meetings were prohibited, and the public fate of Moravian piety was sealed for several decades. Prominent academics attacked the Herrnhuters and a torrent of anti-Moravian writings gushed into the Dutch polders. The development of Herrnhuter piety during the so-called *Sichtungszeit* repulsed even so ardent a supporter of the Moravian cause as the irenical Reformed minister Hieronymus van Alphen.<sup>68</sup> An IJsselstein magistrate did defy the church by becoming a member of the Herrnhuter community in 1741, despite the pressure put on him by the consistory.<sup>69</sup> Most other members of the Reformed Church who joined the community were censured; in the end, the Herrnhuters found a welcome reception mostly among Mennonites, Collegiants and the more unconventional Calvinists.<sup>70</sup> Johannes Deknatel (1698–1759), for instance, a well-to-do Mennonite preacher at Amsterdam, maintained close relations with the Herrnhuters between 1734 and 1750.<sup>71</sup> Zinzendorf himself qualified Bartholomeus Hasselman (1706–1787), a monied

<sup>67</sup> F. Kuypers, *Godtgeleerde verhandeling, opgesteld by wyze van een brief, aan den heer Fredrik de Watteville* [*Theological treatise, conceived as a letter to Friedrich de Watteville*] (1739), 50.

<sup>68</sup> Smits, ‘Zinzendorf en Maria Louise van Oranje’, 57. Another Herrnhuter sympathizer is discussed in Karels, ‘De Hoogduitse predikant David Brünings’ and Exalto and Karels, *Waakzame wachters*; Brünings (1704–1749) died during the proceedings against him.

<sup>69</sup> Peucker, ‘s *Heerendijk*, 141–142.

<sup>70</sup> Peucker, ‘s *Heerendijk*, espec. 189–196.

<sup>71</sup> Leendertz, ‘Joannes Deknatel’.

manufacturer, as a 'gereformirter separatist'. The two daughters of the famous Socinian Samuel Crell, another of Zinzendorf's friends, also joined the community. By 1740, the outcome was evident. The Reformed clergy had successfully preserved the identity of the confessional public sphere.

#### 2.4 THE SPECTRE OF SEPARATISM

The general success of the Reformed church in silencing or controlling the threat to the confessional public sphere represented by Hebrews, Hattemists, Behmenists, and Moravians did not put an end to the pietist troubles. Clerical leaders had to contend also with 'Reformed pietism' proper. Dutch Reformed pietism has often been described, especially by its twentieth-century advocates, in terms of a 'Further Reformation' movement (the so-called *Nadere Reformatie*).<sup>72</sup> Stressing the essential orthodoxy of the movement, much of this recent historiography is based on the assumption that true orthodoxy is of the experiential kind.<sup>73</sup> In fact, however, the 'Further Reformation' received its canon of authoritative writers, the so-called 'Old Fathers', only in the nineteenth century, and even now these seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writers are recognized as normative spiritual leaders in some Dutch Calvinist communities. Conversely, representatives of the eighteenth-century Calvinist establishment have all but sunk into oblivion, if not disrepute. Given the rather one-sided historiography concerning Dutch pietism, it is important to realize that in the eyes of the eighteenth-century clergy who defended the *public* presence of Dort, there was no such thing as a 'Further Reformation' movement. They themselves applauded calls for piety and devotion, as long as the public stature of Reformed orthodoxy was preserved and its intellectual foundations respected. What the reigning clergy objected to was sectarianism, referred to variously as enthusiasm, fanaticism, antinomianism, mysticism, and quietism, ranging from the Collegiants to the Hattemists and from the Moravians to the

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<sup>72</sup> Another term often used is 'Reformed pietism'. The best recent overview of Dutch pietism in the eighteenth century is Van den Berg, 'Die Frömmigkeitsbestrebungen in den Niederlanden'; an introduction to the seventeenth-century movement is Van Lieburg, 'From pure church'. On international literary exchange, see op 't Hof, 'Die nähere Reformation'.

<sup>73</sup> E.g. Brienens *et al.*, ed., *De Nadere Reformatie*.



predestinarian brand of experiential piety in their own ranks. The term ‘pietism’ itself was rarely used. The *Complete history of the so-called pietists* which appeared in 1770 concentrated wholly on the German pietism inaugurated by Spener.<sup>74</sup> Pietists, the author said, can be understood to mean the praiseworthy supporters of piety. However, he continued, the term now often refers to fanatics who separate themselves from the public church under the mantle of piety. The book was intended as a warning to the Dutch church to remain on its guard against schismatic activities in the name of devotion. Such warnings were issued frequently in the first half of the eighteenth century,<sup>75</sup> when the clergy had to cope with several pietist *beroeringen* or troubles. In this section three major debates will be briefly reviewed—the debates concerning Eswijler, Schortinghuis, and Kuypers—to illustrate the nature of the public church’s successful response to Reformed pietism.

If the ‘separation of religious from ecclesiastical life’ correctly describes the consequences and sometimes the aims of the eighteenth-century ‘evangelical awakening,’<sup>76</sup> one can hardly find fault with the reservations of contemporary church leaders. Their duty was to maintain an orderly church organization, one that preserved the doctrine, performed the rituals, educated the people and generally watered the ground on which piety would grow. Like most other eighteenth-century clergies, the Dutch too had to contend with believers who endorsed an understanding of divine grace that seemed to render irrelevant the literal meaning of sacred texts and thus to circumvent ecclesiastical control. Memories were often revived of the ex-Jesuit Jean de Labadie (1610–1674), who had separated from the Reformed Church in 1670 with his flock of disciples. The Labadist movement was characteristic of most pietist sectarian groups in that it fiercely denounced the establishment as utterly corrupt and radicalized Calvinist ecclesiology by restricting membership of the visible church to those who could show signs of their regeneration. Dependent on the financial backing of adherents and sympathizers, this elitist movement even-

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<sup>74</sup> A. van Hardeveldt, *Eene volledige historie der zogenaamde piëtiſten* (1770); review in *VL* 1771-i, 311. Van Hardeveldt drew on German authors like Mosheim and Lampe.

<sup>75</sup> Moravians were sometimes accused of establishing a state within the state; *De Nederlandsche criticus*, 113–120.

<sup>76</sup> Ward, *The Protestant evangelical awakening*, 46–53.

tually succumbed to age and poverty on an estate in Friesland.<sup>77</sup> To the established clergy, however, separatism remained a spectre. Leading clerics worried by pietist inroads into the public church had to contend with two oft-related phenomena. In the first place, there was the one-sided emphasis on spiritual enlightenment among theologians and clergymen in the pastoral field; in the second, there were the *oefenaars* or itinerant lay preachers who competed directly with the church. It was feared that Reformed pietism in its more extreme forms would lead to arbitrary religiosity, ecclesiastical fragmentation, and a corruption of the religious quality of the public domain.

The intellectual debate on Reformed pietism fought out in the open during the 1730s and 1740s has been mainly treated as a conflict between two slightly distinct theologies.<sup>78</sup> It seems no less pertinent to discuss the conflicts on pietism in terms of a concerted defence of the confessional public sphere. During the first half of the eighteenth century, the self-appointed guardians of that public were the Cocceian divines, who as a firmly entrenched ecclesiastical majority attempted to protect, and at times even monopolize control over, the public life of the church. The conflicts began in 1734 with the publication of an abridged edition of a work on experiential piety by Johannes Eswijler (c. 1633–c. 1719), a German immigrant and lay pastor. His *Solitary meditations*, first published in 1685, sold like hot cakes among pietist sections of the populace. Conventicles used it for several years, but eventually the work was attacked for its ‘mystical’ tendencies, for emphasizing (or so it seemed) the spirit at the cost of the letter. In the confrontations begun by the Cocceians, the concern for separatism is prevalent. The titles of their several dozen writings characteristically referred to the pietists as seducers, deceivers and heretics, and claimed to defend truth, piety, charity, ecclesiastical peace and the formularies<sup>79</sup>—drawing on the standard vocabulary used in defence of confessionalism. The Cocceians even translated writings by respected Voetians of an earlier generation, such as the *Historical and theological exercises on the origins, progress and opinions of the old and new antinomians* (1700), written against the Hebrews by Melchior Leydekker (1642–1721), and the *Teachings and experiences of the Labadists*

<sup>77</sup> Saxby, *The quest for the New Jerusalem*, 313–336.

<sup>78</sup> An overview in Van den Berg, “‘Letterkennis’ en ‘geestelijke kennis’”.

<sup>79</sup> Van Lieburg, *Eswijlerianen in Holland*, 190–202.

(1685) by Willem à Brakel (1635–1711).<sup>80</sup> In due course, even the Groningen professor Antonius Driessen, a Cocceian who sympathized with pietism, rejected Eswijler's teachings as heretical.<sup>81</sup> One of the fieriest defenders of the pietist cause was Jacob Groenewegen (1707–1780), an itinerant lay preacher who berated the Cocceian clergy for their addiction to mere literal knowledge of the Bible. Although the government prevented further measures against Eswijler's book, by 1739 it had been all but outlawed by those who monitored the confessional public sphere—the preachers, the classes, the powerful South Holland Synod, and the theological faculties.

Then, in 1740, Willem Schortinghuis (1700–1750) published his *Inner Christendom*, marking the beginning of a second controversy.<sup>82</sup> A preacher in the Province of Groningen, Schortinghuis drew on broad traditions of Christian piety, largely via English and Dutch puritan authors of the seventeenth century. Influenced also by the German pietism in neighbouring Ostfriesland, he too contended that the Bible could only be understood through special revelation. Again, the Cocceian clergy retaliated. Orthodox Cocceians like Dionysius van de Keessel (1700–1755) and Nicolaas Hartman (1677–1748) wrote a number of tracts in the 1740s, emphasizing the need for a rational understanding of the Scriptures and condemning the emphasis on spiritual knowledge as a return to Papism, since it excused people from examining the literal text. Defending the establishment, Hartman condemned the pietists thus:

In the work of grace the most respected Divines are considered incompetent slaves of the letter [*letterknegten*]: and the most inexperienced in the word of truth are raised to *Professors*, yes, to inspectors who judge a person's state before God.<sup>83</sup>

Reformed preachers at Emden, where pietism was a force to be reckoned with, defended Schortinghuis. In fact, the three last dukes of Ostfriesland were all Reformed pietists who did what the Reformed

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<sup>80</sup> M. Leydekker, *Historische en godgeleerde oeffeningen over de oorsprong, voortgang en gevoelen van de oude en nieuwe antinomianen* (1700); W. à Brakel, *Leere en leydinge der Labadisten* (1685, 1738).

<sup>81</sup> His colleague Cornelis van Velzen, the Voetian who had warmly received Zinzendorf, could find no fault with Eswijler.

<sup>82</sup> W. Schortinghuis, *Het innige Christendom* (1740); Kromsigt, *Wilhelmus Schortinghuis; De Vrijer, Schortinghuis*.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Van den Berg, ““Letterkennis” en “geestelijke kennis””, 251.

kings of Prussia did as well: play off pietism against orthodoxy in governing an essentially Lutheran territory. Similarly, pietism seems to have been employed by some Dutch magistrates to keep the ambitions of the Cocceian clergy in check. When the South Holland Synod tried to have *Inner Christendom* banned, Hendrik van Hees (1695–1756), the diplomatic political commissioner at the synod, simply prevented a vote on the issue. Van Hees was sharply criticized by Van de Keessel in a pamphlet that was duly forbidden by the States of Holland.<sup>84</sup> The most powerful Cocceian of all, Joan van den Honert, was incensed and publicly rebuked Van Hees' policy in a sermon.<sup>85</sup>

Joan van den Honert (1693–1758) was the son of an influential Leiden professor, Taco Hajo van den Honert (1666–1740). Van den Honert Jr. himself became a theology professor at Utrecht (1727) and Leiden (1734), and was one of the principal clerical authorities in Holland during the 1730s and 1740s. He was a man who zealously protected the interests of his church and carefully watched over the observance and maintenance of its confessions. Not without reason was he nicknamed the 'Pope of Leiden' and even the 'Pope of Holland'. Van den Honert was an authoritative divine; a preface written by him was looked upon as a great privilege. He was also a devoted controversialist, albeit one who debated rationally in a polite but infuriatingly patronizing tone. Van den Honert is best regarded as a clerical *regent*, an ecclesiastical oligarch who maintained excellent relations with various ruling families in the Republic (including his own), dedicated most of his works to magistrates and other persons of influence, took care to marry women of appropriate stock, and was exceptionally proud of what he believed to be his own noble parentage. Church orthodoxy and church harmony were Van den Honert's two main priorities. The fact that he was relatively successful in achieving both aims testifies to his talents in networking as well as to his perseverance. There is no institute more intractable than a semi-state church in a loosely organized republic.

Cocceians like Joan van den Honert tended to minimize the

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<sup>84</sup> *Jongelenen* no. 21.

<sup>85</sup> Van Lieburg, *Eswijlerianen in Holland*, 133. Van Lieburg (63, 110–111) points out that Van Hees had earlier obstructed the church's censorship during the Eswijler affair. As president of the High Council (the highest court of appeal in Holland and Zeeland), Van Hees was an influential man; see Bakhuizen van den Brink, 'Mr. Hendrik van Hees'.

differences between the literal knowledge of the Bible and inward enlightenment by the Spirit. He claimed that the unregenerate had as much knowledge of the truth as the regenerate; the difference was merely that the latter's knowledge had been 'sanctified unto him', while the former's had not. Such doctrinal reflections directly mirrored separatist tendencies among the pietists. The principal issue underlying the elaborate doctrinal discussions of the 1730s and 1740s was not merely a difference in spiritual and devotional preference, but the pietist belief that it is possible to single out the true believers within a congregation. This notion directly threatened the unity of the church, and hence the writings of Van den Honert and his colleagues are sated with arguments refuting the idea of visible saints. In his own sermons, Van den Honert stressed the exegetical point that while 'Zion' referred to the invisible church, 'Jerusalem' meant the visible, which included *both* true believers and outward confessors.<sup>86</sup> He brought the issue to the academy in his inaugural address of 1727, arguing that the mystical marriage between Christ and the Church is one between the Bridegroom and the *congregation*, rather than the individual.<sup>87</sup> In another academic address, held in 1734, he refuted pietist views on regeneration.<sup>88</sup> He even sought and got the approval of the Stadtholder for his rejection of pietism.<sup>89</sup> Between 1740 and 1757 he wrote prefaces for an extensive series of English expository writings, stressing the importance of a thorough knowledge and a proper understanding of the *whole* Bible, not just a few choice passages taken out of context and assumed to prescribe the exact inner experiences true believers are supposed to undergo.<sup>90</sup> A goodly portion of *The church in the Netherlands examined, and urged to convert* (1746), a magnificent revised prayer day sermon of more than 500 pages, is devoted to refuting the pietist saints who had so much insight into their own passions (incessantly crying, 'O, what a blessed unbecoming!' and other ridiculous things), but so little in the Bible

<sup>86</sup> J. van den Honert, *Versameling van heilige mengelstoffen* (1723), 104–289 (on Ps. 84).

<sup>87</sup> J. van den Honert, *De divinis nuptiis, sive de Jesu Christi et ecclesiae matrimonio* (1727).

<sup>88</sup> J. van den Honert, *De regeneratione* (1734). In 1739 he demonstrated that the Waldensians held predestinarian views and were, therefore, quite different from contemporary Moravians; J. van den Honert, *De Bohemorum et Moravorum ecclesia* (1739).

<sup>89</sup> As Van den Honert himself relates in his *Lykreden, over syne doorlugtigste hoogheid Willem Karel Henrik Friso* [Funeral sermon on his august highness (. . .)] (1752).

<sup>90</sup> *Verklaring van de geheele Heilige Schrift* (1740–1757).

itself.<sup>91</sup> Eventually, Van den Honert sought to head off the pietists by issuing his own devotional work, *Man in Christ* (1747), written 'according to the demands of the reasonable and evangelical religion', and cunningly dedicated to the pietist Marie-Louise of Orange. He resoundingly criticized the 'poorly educated and often thick-blooded and melancholic People', tormented by the need to demonstrate their own regeneration. Apart from causing existential anxiety, the habit of determining one's state of salvation and that of others led to schisms in households, neighbourhoods, towns, and eventually the whole land.<sup>92</sup>

The third separatist controversy was instigated by Gerard Kuypers (1722–1798), himself the son of an outspoken Cocceian opponent of Herrnhuters and Reformed pietists.<sup>93</sup> Kuypers had studied theology at Leiden under no one less than Van den Honert. In 1745, at his first parish in Amsterdam, Kuypers' sermons had evoked cries of emotion among his congregation, but this was nothing compared to what happened when he sermonized the congregation of his later parish at Nijkerk (or Nieuwkerk), on Sunday 16 November 1749. His sermon on Psalm 72:16, ('There shall be an handful of corn upon the top of the mountains'), was apparently so effective that Kuypers had to spend the whole night providing spiritual guidance to his flock. On the following day, with the church filled to capacity, people began to cry out and weep and convulse. These symptoms increased in number and intensity during the next few weeks as a wholesale revival set in. Convinced of, and distressed by, their sin, the people hung onto the words of their minister, who, as he said, opened to them the way to Christ and helped many to attain certainty of faith. Extreme emotionalism brought on by existential despair manifested itself for more than half a year.

The 'Nijkerk troubles' have been plausibly characterized as the Dutch version of the great awakenings in Scotland and New England, where revivals occurred at their most impressive, under the leadership of George Whitefield (1714–1770) and Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758).<sup>94</sup> The happenings at Nijkerk had no sooner begun than

<sup>91</sup> J. van den Honert, *De kerk in Nederland* (1746), 274; on 2 Chron. 15:12 (on the unity of the covenant).

<sup>92</sup> J. van den Honert, *De mensch in Christus* (1749, 1761), dedication and 9–11.

<sup>93</sup> Nauta, 'Gerard Kuypers' and 'Een uitloper van de methodistische opwekkingsbeweging in Nederland'; Huisman, *Geloof in beweging*.

<sup>94</sup> Ward, *The Protestant evangelical awakening*, Spaans ed., *Een golf van beroering*.

they came under attack, and an outburst of pamphlets published between 1750 and 1752 castigated the revival variously as an epidemic of *morbus melancholicus*, an outbreak of enthusiasm, and, above all, a spate of unlawful pietist sectarianism. Justifying his belief that it was possible to separate converted sheep from unconverted goats, Kuypers himself appealed to the awakenings on the other side of the Atlantic.<sup>95</sup> It was precisely Kuypers' belief that the inward state of believers could be judged which elicited criticism—above all from Van den Honert, who rejected the emotional fixation on personal iniquities as disorderly, and deplored the way passions were roused and the judgement was beclouded.<sup>96</sup> Kuypers, in turn, had his own supporters. An eloquent Scottish minister at Rotterdam, Hugh Kennedy (1698–1764), defended his colleague with a *Humble defence of the work of the Holy Spirit in Scotland and Nieuwerkerk* (1751).<sup>97</sup> Kennedy had left Scotland in 1737 for the Republic, where he remained until his death despite a call in 1742 to Dunfermline to succeed the revivalist Ralph Erskine (1685–1752). Emphasizing the will rather than reason, Kennedy stressed the role of the passions in conversion experience, and generally argued that the revivals were perfectly orthodox. It is not illogical, therefore, to compare the Nijkerk 'troubles' with the Cambuslang revivals (a deplorable schismatic movement, according to Van den Honert). Kennedy had already translated evangelical writings by Thomas Halyburton (1624–1712), an orthodox Scottish Calvinist raised at Rotterdam, whose *Great concern of salvation* (1721–1722) was praised at the time by both Wesley and Whitefield, and writings by James Robe (1688–1753), the minister at Kilsyth who had led a revival in the early 1740s. Robe's *Faithful narration* of 1742 appeared in Dutch a year later. Kuypers' own *Faithful narrative* of 1750, in which he parried his critics, was obviously modelled after Robe's account (which in turn is reminiscent of Edwards' *Faithful narrative of a surprizing work* of 1737, translated into Dutch in 1740 by Isaac le Long).<sup>98</sup> Thus, there were contacts between Scotland and

<sup>95</sup> Huisman, *Geloof in beweging*, 55–56.

<sup>96</sup> J. van den Honert, *Aenmerkingen op het werkjen, door Do. Gerardus Kuipers uitgegeeven* (1750), 75.

<sup>97</sup> D.tr. H. Kennedy, *Nederige verdediging van het werk des Heiligen Geestes* (1751).

<sup>98</sup> G. Kuypers, *Getrouw verhaal* (1750); J. Edwards, *Geloofwaardig historisch bericht* (1740). An English translation of Kuypers account was published in vol. II of John Gillies' *Historical collections relating to remarkable periods of the success of the Gospel*, Glasgow 1754–1786. Cf. also an account of the New England Awakenings by the German pietist Johann Adam Steinmetz (1689–1762), *Geloofwaardig historisch berigt van het heer-*

the Republic, between Moravians and Reformed pietists, and between experiential Voetianism and international revivalism. It seems probable that Kuypers, who, in Van den Honert's words, was lost in 'that Scottish Labyrinth of Experiences', tried to model the conventicles and *oefeningen* he found at Nijkerk after the Scottish revivals led by Robe, Erskine, and Whitefield.

It is possible to read the Nijkerk events from two related perspectives. In the first place, they were an expression of the way conventicle pietism was transformed into a full-scale evangelical revival, into a phenomenon that seemed to promote an inward conversion experience at the cost of outward confessionalism as the basis of the religious public. The claim to the 'publicness' of inward convictions never stood much of a chance; even Kuypers himself, once his own enthusiasm had abated, emphasized emotional control. The Nijkerk troubles can be reckoned as part of the Protestant evangelical awakening as it developed in the three or four decades before 1750, although the Dutch Reformed clergy were remarkably successful in rendering the phenomenon harmless. In the second place, the Nijkerk events can be seen as a large-scale resurgence of traditional Reformed pietism. The church historians Ypey and Dermout first put this perspective forward in the early nineteenth century. They argued that local religious culture at Nijkerk was deeply influenced by the popular pietism of the *oefenaars*, and that Kuypers, a highly educated man with an apparent interest in orthodox conversion experience, tried to take advantage of the situation. Initially overwhelmed by the immediate effects of his preaching, he later worked hard to steer the revival in an orderly direction. This seems a plausible explanation. Kuypers probably wished to improve on lay pietism, attempting to transform popular understandings of religious experience into ecclesiastically acceptable forms. For instance, he explicitly demanded the compliance of the *oefenaars* to the decisions of the church council. Kuypers was, from this point of view, an exemplary pastor. He subsequently accepted membership of the social and religious establishment by becoming professor of theology at Groningen in 1765. He probably owed his appointment to his wife, who was related to two

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*lyk werk Gods* (1740). When Robe published his *The rise and continuing progress of a remarkable work of grace in the United Netherlands* (1752) it was immediately translated into Dutch, with a preface by Kennedy; D.tr. J. Robe, *'t Geloofwaardig en kort verhaal* (s.a.).



of the governors of the university.<sup>99</sup> The only salient detail of these later years are his Patriot sympathies—again possibly a result of his alliance by marriage to the Groningen political elite.

Despite the opposition, pietism was inextricably intertwined with life in the Reformed Church. Pietism reflected the perennial struggle against spiritual anxiety that had pursued Protestant religious experience since the sixteenth century. No Calvinist denied that justification came by faith alone. The nagging question concerned the certainty of faith. How do we *know* that we have the saving faith? How do we determine the validity of a faith experience? Dutch Reformed pietism developed an intricate system of subtle distinctions between different spiritual states, each of which could be determined by meticulous examination of faith experience. Pietist preaching put much emphasis on the distinction between the regenerate and the unregenerate, and pietist religious leaders, both lay and ordained, began visibly to separate the one from the other during sermons and other meetings of the faithful. This was called ‘discriminating’ preaching, which catered to the ‘convinced’, the ‘anxious’, the ‘doubters’, the ‘unconsoled’, and so on, each according to his or her spiritual state. Lampe, the arch-pietist, even required the elect in the congregation to stand up when he addressed them in the concluding sections of his sermons. Lampe himself was a Cocceian, a leader of the so-called ‘serious’ (*ernstige*) or ‘Lampeian’ theological school which stressed the experiential effects of the covenant of grace rather than its temporal development over time. Although their exegesis remained recognizably Cocceian, this school in due course approximated the views on religious experience defended by the ‘Brakelian’ school, which in turn represented a ‘mystical’ brand of Voetianism.<sup>100</sup> There was all the more reason, then, for the Cocceian establishment—variously called the ‘Leiden’, ‘Lucid’ (*Heldere*) or ‘Resolute’ (*Cordate*) Cocceians—to be wary, since ‘false mysticism’ seemed to be spread-

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<sup>99</sup> Huisman, *Geloof in beweging*, 138. Similarly, Jacob Chevalier (1728–1786), a Dutch theology student and scion of a wealthy Amsterdam family, was inspired by the Nijkerk events and with Tersteegen started up mass conversions at Mülheim in Germany; he was forced to leave and ended up as a warm defender of Dort in Friesland. Van Andel, *Gerhard Tersteegen*, 49–50.

<sup>100</sup> An interesting figure in this regard is Franciscus Burman (1628–1679), who in his *Synopsis theologiae*, a thoroughly Cocceian dogmatic handbook, developed a view of the order of salvation that closely resembled the Voetian, thus anticipating later Cocceian pietism. Broeyer, ‘Franciscus Burman’, 104–130.

ing among their own. The terms used by the two groups to denote themselves and each other are perhaps the most revealing. The pietists called themselves 'true spiritual people, spiritual preachers, loyal physicians of the soul, true fathers, and angels of the congregation', and rejected their opponents as 'letter slaves, soul murderers and servants of merit.' The established divines regarded themselves as 'learned men, wise interpreters of the Bible, elevated minds, pleasant court preachers, upright ministers of the Gospel, defenders of the freedom of the New Testament, and honourable sons of consolation.' They called their opponents 'enthusiasts, fanatics, severe Law preachers, stern rulers over consciences, intractable people, disturbers of church and society, Pharisees, hypocrites, and serious deceivers.'<sup>101</sup>

If members of the Cocceian establishment tried to silence what they regarded as schismatic elements in the public church, others attempted to unite the divided brethren. One such attempt was a solidly confessional appeal to unity by the Zeeland minister Hubert Pieroom (1674–1741), who posthumously pursued ecclesiastical consensus by invoking synodal authority, the commentary in the official States Bible, and the formularies of faith.<sup>102</sup> Pieroom's book demonstrates how the maintenance of an undivided confessional public sphere depended on preserving oligarchic relations in church and state. It was dedicated to four members of the local magistracy, three of whom were nephews of the editor, Ægidius Stokmans (1703–1765), who himself was Pieroom's son-in-law and successor as a minister.<sup>103</sup> Another attempt at Calvinist concord was later praised by Christiaan Sepp as one of the rare instances of eighteenth-century Reformed irenicism.<sup>104</sup> Actually the book is a rather meagre attempt to reintegrate pietist currents within the Cocceian establishment. Written by the 'serious' Cocceian Henricus Ravesteyn (1693–1749), the 100-page booklet was somewhat pompously called *Philadelphia, or ecclesiastical congress of peace* (1746).<sup>105</sup> Ravesteyn noted that he could have attempted

<sup>101</sup> Ravesteyn, *Philadelphia*, 39–40.

<sup>102</sup> Hubert Pieroom, *Kerken eendragt gestaapt met synodale voorschriften* [*Ecclesiastical concord supported by synodal rules*] (1747).

<sup>103</sup> Stokmans himself later followed in his father-in-law's footsteps by publishing a sermon on brotherly love: Æ. Stokmans, *Twe kerkelyke redewoeringen* [*Two church sermons*] (1755).

<sup>104</sup> See Sepp, 'Irenische pogingen,' 153

<sup>105</sup> H. Ravesteyn, *Philadelphia, of kerkelyk vredens congres* (1746); Ravesteyn mentions Hieronymus van Alphen, Zinzendorf's acquaintance, as his predecessor in the pursuit of concord.

to procure peace by following normal ecclesiastical procedure. This would have meant bringing his appeal to the local classis, whose representatives would take it to the provincial synod, whose members would in turn put the appeal to the various classes in the province, which would then discuss it and subsequently present their own verdicts to the synod, which would contact the other provincial synods, and so on and so forth. However, making a direct call upon the public clergy and church members seemed a somewhat less elaborate procedure. Ravesteyn's suggestion was to organize an ecclesiastical congress of leading ecclesiastics (academy professors and representatives from each classis in the United Provinces) to examine and settle the differences concerning pietism. In effect, he called for nothing less than a national synod. If this made his proposal impracticable from the outset, since the government had never shown the slightest inclination to duplicate Dort, it did not prevent Ravesteyn from making practical suggestions on how to organize a synod. He made a point of mentioning favourably the main cog in the Cocceian machine, Joan van den Honert, generally lamented the lack of concord that weakened the Republic and obstructed unity with the Lutherans, and ended by quoting a poem included in a translation of Bénédict Pictet's *La morale chrétienne* (1694): 'What is sweeter than Peace?'<sup>106</sup>

The Voetians, who were generally sympathetic to pietism, never lost their foothold in the public church, and thus Reformed pietism remained at least partially subject to ecclesiastical control. As the influence and power of the 'Leiden' Cocceians gradually diminished, a new public developed, a public based not on maintenance of confessional unanimity but on polite or civilized citizenship. By the 1760s, separatism from the public church was no longer a public issue; the main problem had become lack of cultured politeness, or self-imposed isolation and avoidance of responsible citizenship. If pietism was freed from ecclesiastical persecution, it was now driven underground by cultural discrimination. Pietism had become the terrain of itinerant or local lay sermonizers and of popular preachers in the smaller congregations, where the reprinting of seventeenth-century devotional literature and the development of fixed conventions on doctrine,

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<sup>106</sup> D.tr. B. Pictet, *De Christelyke zedekunst* (1720), tr. by François Halma, who also wrote the poem.

speech, and clothing maintained a specific brand of Calvinist piety. Pietists were now generally called *fijnen*, a word derived from Lam. 4:2 ('The precious sons of Zion, comparable to *fine* gold'). Easy to caricaturize, the *fijnen* were denounced for their sanctimony in condemning virtuous Christians as Pelagian legalists, for their vulgarity in conversing with God on a first-name basis, for their anti-social conventicles, and for using absurd diminutives in an esoteric 'language of Canaan'. Critical voices looked upon the Reformed pietists as 'troublesome fault-finders, wiseacres, nit-pickers, censors and contradictors of everything that is praised and approved of by the greater majority.'<sup>107</sup> As mouthpieces of the polite public, moral weeklies often exercised criticism. While some of them pointed out that not all pietists were hypocrites, all condemned the 'foolish and bitter gatherings' led by lay preachers who manipulated the ignorance of the masses.<sup>108</sup> For the second half of the century, the tone was set by the *Lettre pastorale contre le fanatisme*, a lucid exposition of pietist anthropology by a Mennonite, Johannes Stinstra, who characteristically attributed experiential excess to temperamental deficiencies and an overexcited fancy.<sup>109</sup>

As for the pietists, they simply continued their traditions of popular devotion, idiosyncratic vocabulary and experiential theology. They managed to create a niche for themselves in which they stayed until the 1830s. Orthodox Reformed pietism was also attractive to a smattering of Jewish converts, who, incidentally, all originally came to the Netherlands from central Europe.<sup>110</sup> The most famous was the erudite Christiaan Salomon Duytsch (1734–1795), who achieved enduring fame within Dutch Reformed pietism, and lasting opprobrium without, by his *God's wondrous guidance* (1768); a book so riveting in

<sup>107</sup> *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, IV (1752), 97–98.

<sup>108</sup> Hartog, *De spectatoriale geschriften van 1741–1800*, 226–229.

<sup>109</sup> J. Stinstra, *Waarschuwinge tegen de geestdrijverij* (1750); the book was granted a review in the influential *Journal Encyclopédique* (1760), T. 1-ii, 85–96. It was translated as *Lettre pastorale contre le fanatisme* (...) (1752), by J.F. Boissy, as *Warnung vor dem Fanaticismus* (1752), with a preface by A.F.W. Sack, as *A pastoral letter against fanaticism* (1753), by H. Rimius, and as *An essay on fanaticism* (1774), by I. Subremont. See also Schings, *Melancholie und Aufklärung*, 185–188. Stinstra's book was specifically aimed at Mennonite pietists, among whom preachers like Deknatel led awakenings around 1750; Van Eijnatten, 'Nederlandse droefheid'.

<sup>110</sup> This applies, for example, to Emanuel Vieira (1700–1760), born in Hamburg, and Christiaan Elias Mirotitsz, born in Prague in 1715. Friedrich Ragstat à Weille (1648–1729), a rabbi at Cleve, found that Trinitarian doctrine was reflected in the Zohar, and converted to Calvinism through Cocceian theology.

depressive biographical details, so plentiful in impulsive introspection and so confident in its appeals to divine guidance that it awakened even foreign interest.<sup>111</sup> Born at Temisoara in Hungary, Duytsch became a rabbi. A spiritual crisis following on the death of his wife and mysterious voices in his head led to a breach with the Jewish community. He embarked on a pilgrimage through Germany and ultimately came to Amsterdam via Hamburg. Before being baptized in 1766, Duytsch experienced numerous difficulties, which he regarded as a chain of ‘special providences’. He found a *fijne* spouse in one of the conventicles, studied theology at Utrecht under the Voetian professor Gisbert Bonnet, and led a thriving ministry for almost two decades. In 1788, rejoicing in the restoration of the Stadtholder, he produced a rather mawkish sermon reflecting his vehement Orangist sympathies. Duytsch was deposed in 1795 because of them, and died soon after. After Duytsch, Jewish proselytes usually tended to be regarded as either enthusiasts or frauds.<sup>112</sup>

The case of Christiaan Duytsch illustrates that to exercise intellectual and religious authority effectively in the polite religious public, it was wiser not to risk being associated with Calvinist pietism of the traditional, popular kind. Thus the earlier negative response to Reformed pietism by the guardians of the confessional public sphere was continued, for different reasons, by those who insisted that the freedom to express one’s personal religious views had to be exercised responsibly, that is to say, according to the new standards of politeness. The confessional discourse which, as this chapter has sought to make clear, was able to contain the threat of pietist sectarianism, represented by Hebrews, Hattemists, Behemenists, Moravians, and the apologists for Calvinist experiential piety, was in due course succeeded by a discourse which allocated ‘enthusiasm’ and ‘fanaticism’, in particular that of the orthodox Reformed brand, to the margins of polite society.

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<sup>111</sup> The book was immediately translated into both German and English. On Duytsch, see Haitisma, *Christiaan Salomon Duijtsch*. The *VL* (1769-i), 53, rejected the arbitrary attribution of personal experiences to divine guidance.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. *VL* 1776-i, 202–203.

## CHAPTER THREE

### VARIATIONS IN CONSENSUS

#### INTRODUCTION: FACES OF THE PUBLIC CHURCH

The Calvinist church of the Netherlands derived its identity largely from a religious conflict, a conflict ultimately resolved by the doctrinal rulings of a synod, a political *coup d'état* by a Counter-Remonstrant Stadtholder, and the subsequent expulsion of those who deviated from the new confessional code. In consequence, the Dutch public was not and is not often associated with diversity, let alone toleration. Yet as a confessional church, the Dutch Reformed church was at times significantly less intolerant than its confessional counterparts across Europe. For one, the Reformed church, since it was not a state church, never forced membership upon the population as a whole. The government would not have permitted it to do so, and the pietist response within the church may well have been even more forceful if it had tried; moreover, as Calvinist divines often pointed out, the Reformed church, too, valued the freedom of conscience guaranteed by the Union of Utrecht. Another important point is that the way the Calvinist church functioned as a public church naturally gave rise to internal variations in doctrine and practice, and thus to certain room for dissent within the church. We have already met with some authoritative ideas on toleration and dissent in our discussion of *Salem's Peace* in section 2.1.

This chapter is devoted to the ideas on toleration which circulated in the Reformed church. The focus here is on the admission of difference rather than the enforcement of concord or the containment of separatist tendencies. The first section examines eighteenth-century developments in the Calvinist conception of toleration among various church leaders, ranging from the ultra-orthodox to the moderately orthodox (3.1). Subsequently, the 'Franeker school' (3.2) and the activities of the orientalist Jan Jacob Schultens (3.3) are highlighted to show that the confessional public sphere itself sustained traditions of leniency and toleration. The last three sections comment on two important eighteenth-century debates related to toleration.

The debate on secular control over the public church was also connected with the pursuit of ecclesiastical harmony and concord (3.4). The debate on fundamental doctrines in general (3.5), and Calvinio-Lutheran unionism in particular (3.6), will be discussed in terms of the attempt to strengthen the confessional domain by interconfessional dialogue.

### 3.1 GUARDING THE FOLD

As the religious public sphere, in the 1750s and 1760s, altered its qualifying premise from confessional to polite, Reformed views concerning toleration were modified in two ways. Both changes will be discussed briefly in this section. The first change concerned the pietist reappraisal of their own tradition, leading to a more self-confident pietism within the church. This development was a response to the informal but broadly supported position on toleration taken in by most leading spokesmen for the public church since the 1740s. Several pietists with an acute historical sense of doctrine began to comment on deviations from dogmatic tradition as they had come to the fore in conventicle piety. They claimed that at least some pietist currents were representative of the true Reformed tradition, and that their views, rather than either 'popular' Calvinist pietism or the broad Cocceian movement, were the real mainstays of the confessional public sphere. The second change concerned the status of the arguments used to defend the church's confessional status. The claims of moderately orthodox church leaders, apologizing for a religious public qualified by the maintenance of confessional authority rather than the free and sincere expression of inward persuasions, began to seem less than convincing. The Reformed clergy generally put forward a legalistic argument. Their defence seemed a badly disguised attempt to assert ecclesiastical dominance by invoking a historical contingency, and a highly dubious one at that; the contingency being the inadvertent success of Counter-Remonstrant factions in manipulating politics and dominating the church before, during and after the Synod of Dort.<sup>1</sup>

We shall first, then, discuss pietist reappraisals of their tradition.

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<sup>1</sup> See Van Eijnatten, *God, Nederland en Oranje*, Chapter 4.

One of the most important doctrinal discussions related to pietism concerned the nature of faith. As early as 1722 a Frisian minister, Theodorus van Thuynen (1679–1742), had attacked the tendency of many pietists to regard the thirsting and hungering after Christ as the essence of faith rather than a phase preceding it. These pietists had extended an argument they found in Willem à Brakel's immensely popular and oft-reprinted *Reasonable religion* (1700). Apart from condoning a questionable doctrinal development, the pietist distinction between faith and assurance seemed to lead pious souls directly into a slough of uncertainty. Conceivably, one could have faith and not know it, and not knowing it could bring one to the brink of despair. These often highly technical discussions on the nature of faith may seem remote from ordinary church life, but for many Reformed believers they were not.<sup>2</sup> In pietist quarters the debates were not only followed, but also widely understood. Moreover, they lasted throughout the century, although they were increasingly seen as a theological debate of such perplexing finesse that only the *fijnen* could possibly be interested. The most important pietist who took his own brethren to task for distinguishing between faith and assurance was Theodorus van der Groe (1705–1784), who regarded the view derived from Brakel as a deviation from the older theologians, above all Reformers like Calvin. At the same time, Van der Groe stressed the need for true conversions—he himself is reputed to have been convinced of his own salvation in the spring of 1736. In his pastoral work, he enjoined people to make certain that they did, in fact, possess the true faith. He distinguished continuously between the regenerate and the unregenerate, and he divided the latter into the deceived, the godless, the lustful, the cerebral, the blind, the hypocrites, the half-converted, the almost-believers, the law mongers, and those who conformed outwardly to church membership.<sup>3</sup> All that remained after such intense spiritual dissection was a small group of elect believers. Van der Groe preached the Law before he preached the Gospel, and he preached both famously. He helped introduce the writings of Ralph Erskine (1685–1752) and Ebenezer Erskine (1680–1754) in the Netherlands; they had begun to appear in the 1740s and 1750s in numerous translations by Jan Ross. It was not lost on the world beyond the narrow confines of Reformed pietism that the Erskine

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<sup>2</sup> The standard study is Graafland, *De zekerheid van het geloof*.

<sup>3</sup> Brienens, 'Theodorus van der Groe'.



brothers had seceded from the Church of Scotland in 1733 to pursue their own 'further reformation'. In this kind of preaching, the doctrine of election all but overshadowed the beneficent proffering of the Gospel. By inordinately emphasizing total depravity, this new pietist method of preaching, argued its opponents, too caused existential anxiety in believers.<sup>4</sup>

A second issue raised by self-conscious pietists of the latter part of the century concerned the nature of justification through faith. Are believers justified from eternity or in time? In other words, is a person justified *before* he believes or *when* he believes? Alexander Comrie (1706–1774), Nicolaas Holtius (1693–1773) and the latter's nephew Jan Jacob Brahé (1726–1776) argued that believers are justified from eternity.<sup>5</sup> Comrie was born in Perth in Scotland, where he had been educated by the Erskine brothers and Thomas Boston (1677–1732).<sup>6</sup> He was also intimately befriended with the other Scot, Hugh Kennedy, who had supported the Nijkerk awakenings. Comrie studied theology at Groningen and became a preacher at a village near Leiden, where he preached in experiential fashion for 38 years. He was an extremely capable Voetian theologian who resolutely defended the *Canones* of Dort against what he not incorrectly regarded as the contemporary Dutch revival of the French theology of Saumur and the 'neonomianism' of Richard Baxter.<sup>7</sup> Comrie achieved lasting fame in some quarters and enduring disrespect in others for writing, together with his colleague Holtius, a series of dialogues called the *Examination of the plan concerning toleration, to unite the teachings of the Synod of Dort, established in the year 1619, with the condemned teachings of the Remonstrants* (1753–1756).<sup>8</sup> The contents were so controversial and the tone so heated that publication was forbidden after the tenth instalment. In particular, Comrie and Holtius attacked the Leiden theologians Johan Jacob Schultens (Pantanechomenus, he who forbears everything) and Joan Alberti (Euruodius, he of the broad way), as well as Van den Honert. They were accused of covertly Arminianizing the church's doctrine. This was probably true as far as Schultens

<sup>4</sup> *De Philosoph* IV (1769), 277–278.

<sup>5</sup> Brahé had started a controversy over the issue in Zeeland during the 1750s.

<sup>6</sup> Graafland, 'Alexander Comrie (1706–1774)'.

<sup>7</sup> On Saumur, see Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut heresy*; for the irenicist contributions of Saumur, see Stauffer, *The quest for church unity*.

<sup>8</sup> [A. Comrie, N. Holtius] *Examen van het ontwerp van tolerantie* (1753–1759).

and Alberti were concerned, but certainly did not apply to Van den Honert, who still provided four, weekly orthodox lectures on the *Canones*.<sup>9</sup> Like Van der Groe, Comrie and Holtius appealed to Calvin's *Institutes*, and even claimed to have established an 'Old Calvinian Society'. This society was supposed to hold meetings in Truth Street at the house of the Synod of Dort, a dwelling founded on the Bible, built by respected reformers like Calvin, Beza, Ursinus and Olevianus, and intended as a bulwark against Papism and Toleration. The Old Calvinians—who in all probability had never actually organized themselves—were soon accused of breaking the 1735 edict against freemasonry, and using their secret society to introduce factionalism in the church.<sup>10</sup> Van den Honert Jr. branded the society as a '*Collegium Illicitum*', citing pandects of Roman law to the effect that '*collegia omnia esse illicita, nisi licita probentur*.'<sup>11</sup> For clergymen like he, any private society was illegal unless it was an extension of the confessional public sphere and had been formally accepted as such.

The Reformed Church of the later eighteenth century was still able to contain pietism; the first secession of pietists would take place only in 1834. In the meantime, eighteenth-century church leadership had another problem to contend with: the growing neglect of, and sometimes contempt for, the formularies of concord, particularly among the well-to-do and the clergy. Certainly, the clergy did their best to educate the nation in the virtues of Dort. In 1719, four Leiden theologians had celebrated the *Fesivitas secularis* at the behest of the authorities and praised Dort for restoring truth and order in church and academy. A revised edition of the formularies was published in 1737, when the church had reached the summit of its public power.<sup>12</sup> A translation of the *Canones* of Dort was published in 1752 by the Utrecht theologian Willem van Irhoven (1698–1760),<sup>13</sup> while Gerard Kuypers later reissued them in Latin, '*in usum iuventutis academicae*', because copies could no longer be obtained at the

<sup>9</sup> Kist, 'Aanteekeningen uit de synodale vergaderingen van Zuid-Holland', 308.

<sup>10</sup> Van den Berg, 'De "Calviniaanse Sociëteit"', 211–212.

<sup>11</sup> Van den Honert, *Adam en Christus* (1753), 376.

<sup>12</sup> *Nieuw druck van den Catechismus* (. . .) (1737).

<sup>13</sup> *Canones Synodi Nationalis Dordracenae* (1752); a second impression appeared in 1788, at the orthodox, Orangist publisher Van Paddenburg. Cf. also *De vyf artikelen tegen de Remonstranten* [*The five articles against the Remonstrants*] (1780), tr. by a certain Jacob Amersfoort (no dates), who claimed that many Reformed were prepared to reject the *Canones* without understanding their contents.

booksellers.<sup>14</sup> Writings on predestination, original and translated, continued to appear—Joan van den Honert's *De gratia Dei, non universali sed particulari* (1725) was an important milestone.<sup>15</sup> There was a growing interest in the historical background of the formularies. Johannes Ens (1682–1732), a Cocceian professor of theology at Utrecht who is mostly remembered for his wanton behaviour, authored a *Short historical account of the public writings concerning the doctrine and worship of the Low German churches of the United Provinces* (1733).<sup>16</sup> Van den Honert Jr. added to this with a history of the Heidelberg Catechism, in a new edition of the *Explicationes catecheticae* (1591) by Zacharius Ursinus.<sup>17</sup> Especially after the 1740s, sermons held at the opening and closing of synodal gatherings began to emphasize the need to preserve both the public status of the confessions and the unity of the Reformed Church.<sup>18</sup> A typical example is an address by the minister Aernout Duircant (1735–1803), *On the respect-inducing antiquity, exceptional utility, and true necessity of Christian ecclesiastical gatherings* (1789), a defence of synodal authority based mainly on the work of Campegius Vitringa Sr.<sup>19</sup> The latter was a much-quoted expert, in particular his address *De synodes, earumque utilitate, necessitatem auctoritate* (1706).<sup>20</sup>

As the religious public shaded from confessional into polite, formularies began to be seen as at best the fortuitous doctrinal expression of a particular church. It seemed wholly arbitrary to preserve intimate relations between one particular denomination and the state; it appeared a question of historical contingency and political machinations rather than legal or moral right. The Reformed clergy of

<sup>14</sup> *Canones Synodi Dordrechtanae* (1772), ed. G. Kuypers.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. D. van den Keessel, *De vastgestelde leer en practijk van Neerlands kerk omtrent Gods bijzondere, algenoegzame en kragtadige genade in Christus* [*The established doctrine and practice of the Netherlands church concerning God's particular, sufficient and compelling grace in Christ*] (1750).

<sup>16</sup> J. Ens, *Kort historisch berigt van de publieke schriften* (1733).

<sup>17</sup> D.tr. Z. Ursinus, *Schat-boek der verklaringen over den Nederlandschen Catechismus*, ed. D. Pareus, tr. by F. Hommius (1736).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Johannes Barueth, *De bloeyende gemeentens in Klein Azien door de onderhouding der Jeruzalemsche kerk-besluiten* [*The flowering congregations in Asia Minor, through the maintenance of Jerusalem's synodal decisions*] (1742); Lambertus Evenhuis, *De plicht der Euangeliegezanten* [*The duty of Gospel ambassadors*] (1748); Cornelius Oosterwyk, *Waarheid, godvrucht en vrede als ten hoogsten noodzakelyk, voor allen die de Kerke Godts beminnen* [*Truth, piety and peace as highly necessary to all who love God's Church*] (1749).

<sup>19</sup> A. Duircant, *Redevoering, over de achtbaarmakende oudheid; zonderlinge nuttigheid; en waare noodzaaklykheid der Christen kerklijke vergaderingen* (1789).

<sup>20</sup> D.tr. *Redevoering* (. . .) *over de synoden* (1742), tr. by S.H. van Idsinga. On Vitringa, see also section 3.2 below.

the later eighteenth century were in a difficult position. They, too, tended to value sincerity and politeness, but they would not and could not take leave of the authoritarian claims of the confessional public sphere. In the following, we shall examine the way in which the later clergy justified the religious status quo. In general, church leaders now accepted confessions as the legal public articulations of the religious views of any particular church, and accordingly modified the claims of the confessional public sphere in the name of toleration. The most important commentary in this regard was Joan van den Honert's address *De mutua Christianorum tolerantia* (1745), an account poor in theoretical profundity and theological creativity but highly significant as a formal statement by the most authoritative divine of the period. In a few words, Van den Honert's oration amounted to the contention that synodal and confessional authority are indispensable to maintaining discipline in both the church and the public sphere.<sup>21</sup> Confessions are a way of making public the particular religious views of the various denominations, the Reformed, the Lutheran, and even the Mennonite and Remonstrant. Confessions do not lead to restraint of conscience, because nobody is forced to join a religious society against his will. All denominations are tolerated as long as they avoid blasphemy, immorality and offences against the common law. Freedom of conscience is a necessary precondition if people are to pledge their loyalty to a confession of their own free choosing. Confessions simply make clear what, exactly, a religious community stands for so that people can make a rational choice as to which church they wish to join (a choice Van den Honert himself claimed to have made, after due examination of various confessions, on January 10, 1719). Van den Honert naturally rejected the idea of a universal church, though he did not dispense with it altogether; as a Cocceian, he simply relegated it to the far-off, prophetic future.

This, in short, was the concept of toleration adhered to by the established clergy during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Van den Honert did not offer a novel view. His general line of argument had been previously defended in the francophone periodical press, notably by the Huguenot divine, journalist and critic Armand Boisbebeau de la Chapelle (1676–1730). Like his Dutch colleague, La Chapelle was a principled defender of civil toleration, who also

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<sup>21</sup> An extensive summary in Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 110–118.

emphasized the role of magistrates as ‘nursing fathers’ (Isa. 49:23) of the church. He denied the practicability of a universal church, steadfastly defended confessions, believed that his views accorded perfectly well with Locke’s *Epistola*, and (as one of his opponents pointed out) in effect limited toleration to those religious views that did not dispute the orthodox ‘fundamental articles’<sup>22</sup>—thus outlawing Socinianism. As Van den Honert put it:

And as far as Christian Forbearance [*Verdraagsaamheid*] is concerned: if it is to be Christian, it must necessarily be founded on the ransom money of Christ’s blood. Firstly, the Nature of the matter demonstrates this. Christian Forbearance is the Soul of Christian Liberty, which is founded on this ransom. Secondly, the Holy Word offers us this notion.<sup>23</sup>

The general drift of the orthodox argument is also evident in *Two theological treatises on the freedom of faith, religion and conscience, as well as on Socinianism and the Socinians* (1741), by the Groningen theologian Daniel Gerdes (1698–1765).<sup>24</sup> He argued that liberty is a quality of the will, and that the freedom of the will cannot be indifferent to reasons provided by the understanding. The power of truth is such that it compels the will to obey by force of reason. The only criterion of religious truth is the Bible, which as such must be supported by the government. Confessions and formularies are simply means to delimit freedom of worship within a particular church. As long as the fundamentals of faith are not disputed, all sects should be allowed freedom of worship. This excludes Socinians, since they deny orthodox fundamentals. Gerdes’ account clearly shows the extent of religious toleration in the orthodox public domain. Protestants from different backgrounds could be legally tolerated, but only by express permission of the civil authorities.

Van den Honert made another important claim in his address. In peaceful times, he said, large numbers of people join the church, not because they are convinced by its doctrines, but because of the material benefits which they are able to derive from church membership. The theme was common enough. One orthodox writer had contended in the 1720s that religious concord means that believers

<sup>22</sup> Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, 30–39, 84.

<sup>23</sup> J. van den Honert, *Aanmerkingen* (1743), 24–25.

<sup>24</sup> D. Gerdes, *Twee godgeleerde verhandelingen over de vryheid des geloofs, des godsdienstes, en der consciencie* [*Two theological treatises on the freedom of faith, religion, and conscience*] (1741). Witteveen, *Daniel Gerdes*, 74–85.

must be 'likeminded' (*eensgezind*, Rom. 15:5) and 'speak the same thing' (Cor. 1:10), and that those who objected to speaking the same thing must necessarily suffer exclusion.<sup>25</sup> The point began to be stressed in the second half of the century. If people could not agree in conscience with the teachings of the Reformed Church, they ought to leave it—which, given the way the Reformed Church functioned as a semi-state church, was not a very practical demand. The main proponents of this view in the 1760s and 1770s were the theology professors Gisbert Bonnet (1723–1805) at Utrecht, and Diederik van der Kemp (1731–1780) at Leiden. Bonnet held an address *De tolerantia circa religionem in vitium et noxam vertente* in 1766.<sup>26</sup> It was an attack on Voltaire's *Traité sur la tolérance* (1763), which had appeared in Dutch translation in September 1764. Within several months, the Frisian States had forbidden it.<sup>27</sup> While Bonnet's argument hardly differs from that of Van den Honert, his particular concern was to preserve the public church's orthodoxy rather than delineate the extent of toleration.<sup>28</sup> He, too, argued that many people remained within the public church only because of the financial and social benefits accruing to church membership. Voltaire, contended the professor, may have written his *Traité sur la tolérance* in an impressive style, but his book is devious and malicious. It was clearly Voltaire's aim to undermine the laws of society and the foundations of Christianity. The notorious Frenchman twists Scripture to suit his own malevolent purposes and uses sly and contrived arguments to convince his readers that all faiths lead to salvation. The Dutch supporters of Voltaire were similarly intent on undermining the public church, believed Bonnet. To introduce secretly and gradually what they cannot establish immediately and publicly is an old ruse long used by deceivers. Why do such frauds remain within the fold? The issue at stake is a simple one: they wish to profit from church membership in order to obtain offices. At Leiden, Van der Kemp (who

<sup>25</sup> See the review of the anonymous *Aenmerkingen over den brief van den heere Drieberge* [*Comments on the letter by (. . .)*] (1728) in *Boekzaal* (1728), I, 231–232.

<sup>26</sup> G. Bonnet, *Orationes duae (. . .) altera de tolerantia circa religionem* (1766); translated into French (1766) and Dutch (1767). Similar arguments in Bonnet, *Verhandeling van eenige byzonderheden betreffende de kerkelyke verdraagzaamheid* [*Treatise on some particulars regarding ecclesiastical toleration*] (1770).

<sup>27</sup> D.tr. Voltaire, *Verhandeling over de verdraagzaamheit in het stuk der religie* (1764). Van Sluis, 'Verlicht en verdraagzaam?', suggests that the translator was a high-ranking Frisian *regent*.

<sup>28</sup> For his views, see Van den End, *Gisbertus Bonnet*, 44–65.

had probably discussed the topic beforehand with his colleague Bonnet) put forward similar views in an address *De bona spe, quae etiam nunc ecclesiae Batavae supersit* (1766).<sup>29</sup> He lamented the lack of interest in the orthodox truth of which the public church was the guardian, and attacked the ‘fallaces insidiae Pseudo-Irenicorum’ (probably a reference to his lenient Leiden colleague Jan Jacob Schultens).<sup>30</sup> Van der Kemp strongly emphasized the need to maintain the formularies, and invoked the secular authorities (and especially the Stadtholder) to defend them.

A contemporary observer distinguished between three kinds of ministers in the public church. There were the orthodox adherents to the confessions, the moderates, who distinguished between useful and necessary truths, and the compromisers or twisters, who argued that the *Canones* of Dort were an obscure product of theological backwardness containing articles which could now be explained with greater clarity with the aid of healthy philosophy and criticism. The latter group regarded themselves as the defenders of a *proper* interpretation of Dort, but in the meantime taught un-Calvinistic doctrine.<sup>31</sup> Such attempts to undermine the church from within—to transform the religious public by surreptitiously undermining its confessional basis—provoked a response from several orthodox divines. One remarkable Calvinist of the period was Johannes Barueth (1708–1782), a Cocceian who had studied under Albert Schultens and who was called to the ministry at Dordrecht in 1745. During the 1740s and 1750s, Barueth developed a reputation as a preacher of penitence, as a pronounced critic of his own time, castigating in his sermons the laxity in church discipline as well as the influence of the magistracy on filling vacancies in the church.<sup>32</sup> Barueth’s views on toleration coincided with those of Van den Honert, Bonnet and Van der Kemp, and like them, he cited Jean Barbeyrac to prove his point.<sup>33</sup> Barueth is often regarded as the so-called ‘Advocate of

<sup>29</sup> Van den Berg, ‘Tussen ideaal en realiteit’, 225–226. Divines in the last decades of the eighteenth century often drew on Bonnet and Van der Kemp; cf. Scharp, *Godgeleerd-historische verhandeling* (1793), 64; Scharp, *Historische brieven* (1796), 144–147.

<sup>30</sup> On Schultens, see section 3.3 below.

<sup>31</sup> Van der Vliet, *Wolff en Deken’s brieven van Abraham Blankaart*, 242.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. J. Barueth, *Boet-bazuin geblazen in Neerlands kerk* [*Trumpet of penitence blown in the Dutch church*] (1748), II, 327.

<sup>33</sup> [J. Barueth], *Letterkundige brieven ter verdediging van de leer en leeraars der gereformeerde kerk* [*Literary letters in defence of the doctrine and ministers of the Reformed Church*] (1768), 34–35. On Barbeyrac, see section 5.5 below.

the Dutch church', the noteworthy anonymous defender of the church's 'constitution, Reformed doctrine, distinguished protectors, orthodox ministers and loyal confessors', as the title page claimed. Appearing on the scene in the early 1770s, the *Advocate* considered it his task to obstruct those who invited all kinds of Christians into the Reformed Church.<sup>34</sup> He was also careful to point out that the various denominations were tolerated by connivance, as a gracious act of the sovereign powers.<sup>35</sup> He observed that he did not wish to oppose 'quiet Roman Catholics, traditional Lutherans, real Mennonites, veritable Remonstrants and orthodox Calvinists'—that is, all who demonstrated allegiance to one of the publicly licensed or tolerated confessions—but that the so-called 'nominal Remonstrants' were the object of his criticism. 'Nominal Remonstrants' were understood to be, especially but not exclusively, Arminians who held doctrinal views that subverted the foundations of Christianity: freethinkers, naturalists, Arians, Socinians, and the like.<sup>36</sup> Barueth also frequently employed the term 'Tolerant'. Using the obvious pseudonym 'Paulus Dortsma' to denote his own doctrinal position, he crusaded, albeit ineffectively, against the clique of 'Tolerants' who remained within the church only because of the power and benefits it provided them.<sup>37</sup> There are two kinds of 'Tolerants', observed one of Barueth's colleagues. There are those who wished to preserve the general truths of Christendom, but seek to destroy the formularies, and those who are interested only in a natural religion based on reason and sentiment. The former are at least as devious as the latter.<sup>38</sup> The same point was made by the translator of Johann Melchior Goeze's *Predigt von*

<sup>34</sup> One of the objects of his attack was the Leiden magistrate Daniel van Alphen; see section 3.4 below. Van Alphen had contended in a preface to the second volume of the *Beschryving der stad Leyden* by the Remonstrant Frans van Mieris (1689–1763) that the Stadtholder regarded Remonstrants and even Collegiants and Catholics as 'brothers in Christ', and that he favoured them at least as much as Calvinists.

<sup>35</sup> [J. Barueth?], *De advocaat der vaderlandsche kerk* (1771–1772), I, 11–14, 22; II, 38.

<sup>36</sup> [J. Barueth?], *De advocaat der vaderlandsche kerk*, II, 89; [J. Barueth], *Het aanweezen en bestaan der naam-remonstranten* [*The essence and existence of nominal Remonstrants*] (1772).

<sup>37</sup> 'Paulus Dortsma', *De Rhythmus Monachicus* (1773), 10–11. Cf. also 'Paulus Dortsma', *Het echt karakter van een Hollandsch tolerant* [*The real character of a Dutch tolerant*] (1773). A similar complaint in Hofstede, *Apologie tegen de lasterende nieuwspapieren*, 253.

<sup>38</sup> Hofstede, *Vervolg der vorige apologiën*, XXI–XXII. Orthodox writers sometimes identified ecclesiastical toleration with lack of true grace; cf. *Opwekking aan alle beleders van den waren gereformeerden godsdienst* [*Call to all confessors of the true Reformed religion*] (1773).



*der Liebe gegen fremde Religionsverwandte* (1771), who dedicated his book to the *Advocate*.<sup>39</sup> Goeze pointed out that Christian charity is not the same as humanitarianism, a view with evident consequences for the limits of toleration.

Seen from the perspective of the early eighteenth century, even the choleric Barueth took in a position that was relatively moderate. His less orthodox or less clerical contemporaries, however, could only view his contentions as a thinly disguised attempt to impose a doubtful priestly authority on the nation. The 'Tolerants' forced the orthodox into a corner during the 1760s and 1770s. The leading clergyman around 1770 was the Voetian Petrus Hofstede (1716–1803).<sup>40</sup> He was at least as adept at political and ecclesiastical manoeuvring as Van den Honert but possessed a rather more amiable character. Heavily criticized by his Arminian compatriots, Hofstede made the same mistake as Barueth by claiming that the Remonstrants were still only tolerated by connivance and had not been officially granted freedom of public worship.<sup>41</sup> His adversaries immediately asserted that the Remonstrants had possessed freedom of worship since at least the 1660s, and that they were publicly supported by the state with all kinds of benefits.<sup>42</sup> The Arminian preacher Jan Kornelis Valk († 1796) devoted a treatise to the topic, against which the South Holland Synod issued a warning. Valk had dared suggest that 'the Arminian Religion is not forborne by the Sovereign out of mere connivance, but has been given public authority.'<sup>43</sup> It would take a

<sup>39</sup> D.tr. J.M. Goeze, *De liefde jegens vreemde godsdienstgenoten* (1772). Goeze had written his sermon against Julius Gustav Alberti, *Zwey Predigten von der Einträchtigkeit mit denen, welche in der Religion von uns verschieden denken* (1771). The translator of Goeze's sermon was a person of high social rank, possibly Z.H. Alewijn (see section 7.4), whose preface was translated as *Einer erhabenen reformirten Standes-Person in den vereinigten Niederlanden, Gedanken über die Gesinnung, Absichten und über das Verhalten der Toleranten unserer Tage* (1773).

<sup>40</sup> De Bie, *Petrus Hofstede*.

<sup>41</sup> P. Hofstede, preface in: Zimmermann, *De voortreflykheid des christelyken godsdiensts*, L–LIX.

<sup>42</sup> Various anonymous pamphlets were published in 1769–1770, e.g. *Papieren, betreffende de vrye godsdienst-oeffening der remonstranten* [*Documents concerning the free religious worship of Remonstrants*] (s.a.).

<sup>43</sup> [J.K. Valk], *Brief (. . .) rakende de openlyke godsdienstoeffening der remonstranten* [*Letter concerning the public religious worship of Remonstrants*] (1770); Kist, 'Aanteekeningen uit de synodale vergaderingen van Zuid-Holland', 326. Cf. also Jan Kornelis Valk [as Orthodoxophilus Philaethes], *Verhandeling van eenige voorname zaken, tot de kerklyke geschiedenis van ons vaderland behoorende* [*Treatise on certain important matters concerning the ecclesiastical history of our country*] (1768), written against Van der Kemp; Valk argued that

younger generation of orthodox Calvinists to recognize that support for the polite religious public also implied acceptance of full religious liberty for dissenters.

The generation of moderately orthodox divines who witnessed the transition from the confessional to the polite public sphere—the generation of Van der Kemp and Bonnet—was in a difficult situation. They often applauded the development of a public of self-reliant, informed and cultivated Christians, but at the same time they were, by profession as well as inclination, devoted to maintaining the authoritarian Old Regime. Their legalistic argumentation met with severe criticism in the 1760s and 1770s. They had tried to stretch toleration within the confessional public sphere to its orthodox limits, but their solutions were criticized from the left for being insufficient and unprincipled, and from the right for surrendering to the latitudinarian spirit of the age. Indeed, the situation for these transitional divines was all the more awkward because their doctrinal position was being undermined by latitudinarians within the Reformed fold itself. These latitudinarians will be discussed in the next two sections.

### 3.2 THE FRANEKER SCHOOL

Contrary to what the reputation of men like Joan van den Honert might lead one to believe, the eighteenth-century Reformed Church was not a monolithic repository of clerical power. Variations in Dutch Reformed theology—represented mainly by Voetianism and Cocceianism, as well as the various pietisms to which either of these schools gave rise—were attended by the development of at least one group of writers who specifically addressed the problem of tolerating doctrinal variations within the confessional public sphere. The Franeker Cocceian school inaugurated by Campegius Vitringa Sr. is the topic of this section. After taking a brief look at the connections between Cocceian theology and toleration theory, we shall discuss Vitringa Sr. and some of his pupils, notably Herman Venema, Petrus Conradi, Joan Alberti, and Samuel Manger.

No less interested in the systematic exposition of dogma than the

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the formularies of concord had been recognized by the government only after the Synod of Dort, so that they could not be regarded as essential to the Republic's constitution.

Voetians, Cocceians at the same time pursued a form of biblical theology *avant la lettre*, centred on historical developments in the divine economy. Committed Voetians, such as Melchior Leydekker, spurned these attempts to employ the covenant as the principle of a dogmatic system.<sup>44</sup> To make matters worse, towards the end of the seventeenth century, the second and third generation Cocceians, putting less stress on covenant theology, extensively developed the historical aspects of their approach by devising intricate linkages between prophecies, types and metaphors on the one hand, and New Testament events on the other. They generally regarded the Bible as a vast commentary on the history of the world from the Creation to the Last Judgement, and usually denoted their theology as ‘prophetic’, ‘typical’ or ‘metaphorical’. The *theologia prophetica* and the periodization of world history into seven ages inflamed critics like the Walloon minister Pierre de Joncourt († 1720), whose *Entretiens sur les différentes méthodes d’expliquer l’Ecriture et de prêcher* (1707) was one of the most vehement attacks on the Cocceian *studium propheticum*. He criticized the Cocceians for employing an untidy and highly uncertain method that related scriptural data to an indistinct future rather than to Old Testament events or the life of Christ.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, for many critics on the right (the Voetians) and the left (exegetes like Jean le Clerc) Cocceian divinity was a poor excuse for arbitrary and suspect exegesis. Henricus Boekholt († 1727) provides an interesting but typical example of improbable exegesis. In his outline of historical developments in the divine economy, Boekholt noted that the triumph of the seventeenth-century Dutch Calvinist church was prophesied in Song 6:13, ‘Return, return, O Shulamite’. The Hebrew word in this phrase means ‘peacefulness’, which evidently refers to the Peace of Münster of 1648, when peace was brought to the people of God. Likewise, ‘O prince’s daughter!’ (Song 7:1) is obviously an allusion to the Dutch church, while her lovely features symbolize the flowering of Dutch commerce and her head (Song 7:5) represents the States General.<sup>46</sup>

In spite of such excesses, prophetic divinity developed into a highly

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Graafland, ‘Structuurverschillen tussen voetiaanse en coccejaanse geloofsleer’, 32–33.

<sup>45</sup> Van Asselt, ‘Pierre de Joncourt’, 146–164; Van der Wall, ‘Between Grotius and Cocceius.’

<sup>46</sup> Boot, *De allegorische uitlegging van het Hooglied*, 281–282.

articulate system, and as such may be seen as an expression of the early eighteenth-century confessional public sphere. The Cocceians themselves regarded their theology as progressive in character. In the course of time (and especially since the appearance of Cocceius himself), there had been progress in knowledge, particularly regarding the coherence of truths and the meaning of Scripture.<sup>47</sup> This belief was connected with the conviction that *libertas prophetandi*—which Cocceians tended to interpret as the freedom to relate scriptural prophecies to the history of Christianity—had a basis in the prophetic writings themselves. The more types and metaphors successfully unravelled, the greater the advancement of theology and the nearer the conclusion of history. Moreover, Cocceians tended to view their divinity as more conducive to peace and concord than Voetian theology. The Cartesio-Cocceian Johannes Braun, for instance, regarded Voetian divinity as a bellicose system that was rigidly scholastic to boot. By contrast, in a typically Cocceian theological system (like that of Braun himself), the individual human conscience was seen as the medium by which God reveals himself to man. Through his conscience, man determines what is true and certain. Braun did not believe that this appeal to the subjective conscience would lead to confusion. On the contrary, he argued that respect for conscience leads to peace of mind, as well as respect for the consciences of others and their particular claims to truth.<sup>48</sup> Thus, for some Cocceian divines at the turn of the century, the individual conscience was intimately related to both rationality and the pursuit of peace and moderation in the church. One of the most rationalist among the Cocceio-Cartesians was Herman Alexander Röell (1653–1718), professor of theology at the Frisian academy at Franeker between 1685 and 1704. He valued the role of conscience in religious matters so strongly that it prompted him to develop a somewhat rationalist Christology (defending the eternal generation of the Son), known throughout the eighteenth century as the ‘Röellist’ heresy.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Graafland, ‘Structuurverschillen tussen voetiaanse en coccejaanse geloofsleer’, 34–35, on the *Doctrina foedorum* (1688) of Johannes Braunius.

<sup>48</sup> Graafland, ‘Structuurverschillen tussen voetiaanse en coccejaanse geloofsleer’, 37, 46.

<sup>49</sup> Van Sluis, *Herman Alexander Röell*, 148–150. There may be a connection here with contemporary discussions on the nature of the human conscience in Huguenot circles; cf. Cerny, *Theology, politics, and letters*, 297–306; Hochstrasser, ‘The claims of conscience’; Hochstrasser, ‘Conscience and reason’; Turchetti, ‘La liberté de conscience’.

The toleration of the Cocceians extended only to a public sphere qualified by the Reformed confessions. Truth claims by believers outside the fold applied only in the realm of natural theology. On the other hand, the historical views of Cocceians tended to be remarkably optimistic, and had a bearing on toleration insofar as they predicted the dawn of Protestant concord.<sup>50</sup> Vitringa's *Anacrisis Apocalypseos Joannis Apostoli* (1705) is a good example. Campegius (Kempe) Vitringa Sr. (1659–1722) was the most significant Cocceian after Cocceius himself and arguably the greatest Dutch exegete of the eighteenth century, as well as a versatile divine of undisputed international acclaim.<sup>51</sup> A Frisian who pursued his distinguished academic career exclusively at Franeker, Vitringa was an excellent dogmatist who did his share of theological polemics. But he was everything but a headstrong quibbler over fine doctrine. In fact, he himself had been accused of heresy more than once and many of the eighteenth-century protagonists of toleration hailed him as their ally. Interestingly, Vitringa can also be categorized as a 'serious' (pietist) Cocceian.<sup>52</sup> As an exegete, he attempted to integrate, albeit to a limited extent, the historical method broached by Hugo Grotius. This led to his toning down the more implausible claims of prophetic theology. He also located the outcome of prophecies in the near rather than the far-off future, which resulted in a distinct focus on the period of the Maccabees (i.e. the second century B.C.).

Notwithstanding these critical modifications, in the eyes of the Reformed clergy the publication of the *Anacrisis* was a major event in the history of prophetic theology. Vitringa drew extensively on the *Clavis apocalyptica* (1627) by Joseph Mede (1586–1638), usually regarded as the first major study to analyze the Book of Revelations as a structured chronological outline of the history of the Christian church. Vitringa similarly interpreted the Apocalypse as a coded description of the history of the New Testament Church, rejecting

<sup>50</sup> On the relations between millenarianism and toleration, see Popkin, 'Skepticism about religion'.

<sup>51</sup> Witteveen, 'Campegius Vitringa und die prophetische Theologie'. Vitringa's masterpiece in the exegetical field was his two volume *Commentarius in librum prophetiarum Jesaiae* (1714–1720); German divines held it in great esteem, and Mosheim wrote the preface to the German translation.

<sup>52</sup> Van den Honert, the anti-pietist, slyly appropriated Venema's reputation in his own work on devotion, *De mensch in Christus*; cf. Van den Berg, 'Die Frömmigkeitsbestrebungen', 556.

in passing the views of Grotius and Bossuet, who had both related John's visions exclusively to early Christendom.<sup>53</sup> He agreed with general Protestant scholarship that the Beast of Rev. 13 symbolized the Roman Church, but also suggested that, given the amount of discord and the lack of charity in the Reformed Church, the Beast was also on a rampage through the Protestant world. The church of Philadelphia in Rev. 3:7 signified the high degree of exemplary Christian concord achieved during the Reformation, a state of affairs that, in Vitringa's expectation, would be restored during Christ's reign of a thousand years.<sup>54</sup> As a partisan to prophetic theology, Vitringa divided the history of the church into seven periods, beginning with the apostolic church. The fifth period was that of the Waldensian pursuit of a purer church, completed in the Reformation. The sixth referred to the contemporary purified, or reformed, church, which, however, lapsed regularly into spiritual and moral decline, a time of clerical jeremiads and divine judgements. The seventh period was an era of peace. Like Mede, whom he cited, Vitringa believed wholeheartedly that the millennium was yet to come. But he was far from being a visionary who expected immediate change. He relegated the end of time to a remote future and strongly emphasized the institutional nature of the New Jerusalem. In the latter-day church, clerical leaders would still supervise the admission of members and test their knowledge. According to Vitringa, the twelve gates of the holy city (Rev. 21:12) referred to the educated overseers of churches and synods.

One particular passage in Vitringa's commentary on Isaiah became a standard reference in the intellectual repertoire of the Dutch toleration debate. Commenting on Isa. 58 as a prophetic vision of the corruption of the Protestant church, Vitringa advised:

Do not compel or force the conscience under a formulary of human invention. Do not define or bind anything that has not been defined in the Canon of faith and discipline laid down by Jesus Christ and the Apostles. O, has it not been related in many histories how brothers and fellows of the faith who refused to subscribe to *formularies* (this is the specious name given to them), against all truth and liberty were

<sup>53</sup> Witteveen, 'Campegius Vitringa und die prophetische Theologie', 346–353.

<sup>54</sup> C. Vitringa Sr., *Nauwkeurig onderzoek van de goddelyke openbaring des H. Apostels Johannes* (1728; this is the Dutch translation of the *Anacrisis*), I, preface and 237–239; II, 627–628.

unfairly thrown into prisons, robbed of goods and honours and expelled from the community, and forced to lead a miserable life, mourned over by those of good and equitable judgement!<sup>55</sup>

Having been written by the great Vitringa, the passage carried authority. The more radical defenders of the cause of toleration were thus in a position to look upon Vitringa as a predecessor. One later critic contended that two excellent books had been put unofficially on the national Index, to wit, Bekker's *The world enchanted* and Vitringa's commentary on Isaiah.<sup>56</sup> Vitringa, the same writer claimed, had vehemently opposed the notion that the Protestant clergy was an estate distinct from the laity; he was valued by the Dutch clergy solely for having contradicted Röell's heresy.

Practically all eighteenth-century Cocceians in some way or other considered themselves pupils of Vitringa. But his most important student was probably Herman Venema (1697–1787), who married the widow of Vitringa's son after being appointed as theology professor at Franeker.<sup>57</sup> Venema was similarly a supporter of prophetic theology, who tried to balance the Cocceian inclination towards arbitrary interpretation with the historical and philological limitations suggested by Grotius. He still published books on prophetic theology as a venerable octogenarian. In his view, the contemporary church resided under the fifth seal, a period of confessional rigidity and lack of real conviction.<sup>58</sup> Venema generally opposed the strict maintenance of formularies, although as an academic he had to operate carefully. In the 1720s he gave his anonymous support to several pietist divines who objected to the church's formulary on baptism; Venema argued that the church could not use liturgical formularies to bind man's conscience. His address *De caractere Antichristi* (1735) elaborated on Vitringa's argument regarding the influence of the Antichrist among Protestants.<sup>59</sup> During the 'Stinstra affair', Venema argued that there

<sup>55</sup> C. Vitringa, *Commentarius in librum prophetiarum Jesiae* (ed. 1724), 772 (commentary on Isa. 58:6). See Stinstra, *Gedagten over den (...) brief van (...) Joan vanden Honert* [*Thoughts on Joan van den Honert's Letter*] (1742), I, 70–75; Goodricke, *Proeve ter opheldering van sommige zaaken*, 75.

<sup>56</sup> [Bosch], *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem*, 150–152.

<sup>57</sup> De Bruïne, *Herman Venema*.

<sup>58</sup> H. Venema, *Praelectiones de methodo prophetica*, Leeuwarden 1775; review in *VL* 1776-j, 55–61.

<sup>59</sup> The argument was apparently common among latitudinarian Protestants; thus the Swiss divine J.H. Ringier wrote a 'Dissertatio theologica de typis Antichristi',

was not enough evidence to accuse the Mennonite Johannes Stinstra of Socinianism.<sup>60</sup> He even implied that Socinians could be tolerated, since toleration does not entail unity of faith. Firmly established at Franeker under the protection of the Stadtholder, Venema demonstrated his familiarity with various foreign authors, most of whom were highly suspect in the public church: Episcopius, Turretini Jr., Werenfels, Le Clerc, Tillotson and Hoadly, as well as Noodt, Barbeyrac, Bayle, and Locke. No wonder that the Groningen professor Antonius Driessen, a highly qualified custodian of orthodox Calvinism, soon enough (after having received inside information from Comrie) accused Venema of heterodoxy regarding the Trinity and the divine authority of Scripture. The claims in Driessen's *Hypotheses arminianizantes* (1733) may have been unfair in this respect, but what did emerge from the debate was the fact that Venema taught a doctrine that closely approached the mediating position in the debate on particular and universal grace as taught by the French school of Saumur.<sup>61</sup>

A Cocceian stronghold throughout the eighteenth century, Franeker had tried unsuccessfully to snare the Swiss latitudinarian Samuel Werenfels in 1704. In 1740, an attempt was made by the university curators to appoint Paul Ernst Jablonski (the son of the famous irenicist Daniel Ernst Jablonski). The Frisian Stadtholder, who exerted considerable influence on the Franeker academy but was obliged cautiously to balance the various theological currents in the church, rejected his nomination. 'Thus we are of the opinion,' wrote the Stadtholder, 'that, particularly in a republic, it is dangerous to innovate anything in the accepted doctrine,' and that for this reason he wished to maintain doctrinal concord.<sup>62</sup> He qualified Jablonski as a theologian who had not only subscribed to 'universalist' doctrine, but also taught it in public. While there were political limits to academic leniency, the Franeker school inaugurated by Vitranga was generally associated with toleration. The list of 'liberal' academics at Franeker is quite impressive. Emo Lucius Vriemoet (1699–1760), an orthodox professor of oriental languages at Franeker since 1731, once held a memorable address in which he contended that the scorn to

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in: *Tempe Helvetica* (1737) I, 449–508. Venema himself embroidered on the topic in addresses held in 1740, 1745 and 1755.

<sup>60</sup> Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 84–85.

<sup>61</sup> De Bruine, *Herman Venema*, 68–84.

<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Van den Berg, 'Theology in Franeker and Leiden', 254.



which the Jews were subject stemmed from ignorance. A decade later, however, he spoke about the duty to defend *true* theological liberty against licentiousness, and probably had both Stinstra and Venema in mind.<sup>63</sup> Much less orthodox than Vriemoet was Petrus Conradi (1707–1781), another noteworthy light in the Franeker tradition, whose literary fame was based only on several addresses. A pupil of Venema, he began his career with a careful critique of ecclesiastical discipline in his address *De necessariis theologi polemici virtutibus* (1741).<sup>64</sup> Conradi argued that defenders of the truth must be equipped with various virtues. These are a sincere love for veracity, so that they remain aloof from the various orthodoxies and their factional claims to truth, and dare instead to inquire into the Scriptures on their own account; sincerity in debating, so that they make use of original sources and genuine statements; justice and fairness, so that they accuse people on the basis of argument rather than insinuation; charity and mildness, so that they can gently convince their opponents of the truth; and prudence, so that they may weigh the differences as to their real significance, and forbear within the church all those who do not deny the fundamental articles. Conradi referred to Turretini Jr. and Werenfels, who evidently formed his main source of inspiration.<sup>65</sup> Because of his address *De necessario, sed probe administrando, rationis usu in religionis revelatae negotio* (1752), Conradi was also seen as one of the few Reformed advocates of rationality. One review periodical mentioned the two main authorities who claimed that though divine Revelation excelled over the natural light, the one could never contradict the other: Turretini Jr. and Conradi.<sup>66</sup> Like

<sup>63</sup> E.L. Vriemoet, *De variis gentium ipsorumque christianorum quorundam in gentem Iudaicam conviciis, ex ignorantia rerum Orientalium maximam partem ortis* (1731); *De academiae frisiae (. . .) suoque officio, veram libertatem theologicam, contra protervam licentiam, tuendi* (1744). Vriemoet was a friend of Gerdes; his letters often express anxiety about the influence of Venema and his pupils.

<sup>64</sup> P. Conradi, *De necessariis theologi polemici virtutibus* (1741); the address was clearly meant as a contribution to the Stinstra affair; see Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 124–125. The Dutch translation of Conradi's address was published in 1742, ostensibly without Conradi's explicit consent, by the Frisian Mennonite Folkert van der Plaats, who was known for his controversial book list. It contains a preface attributed to Koenraad Bremer († 1766), a Remonstrant minister, who (citing Burnet, Wake, Turretin, Werenfels and Ostervald) called upon the public clergy to exercise forbearance so that Protestants could unite.

<sup>65</sup> Conradi mentioned Turretini's *De affectibus a vero abducentibus* and *De theologo veritatis & pacis studioso*, and Werenfels' *De controversiis theologicis*.

<sup>66</sup> *VL* 1761-i, 123–133; this address was also translated into Dutch (Rotterdam 1753).

their Swiss counterparts Turretini and Werenfels, Venema and Conradi were generally regarded as supporters of Calvinist-Arminian reconciliation, indeed so much so that their pupils found it difficult to begin a career in the church. A later commentator pointed out that the academic followers of Vitranga were referred to in a disparaging manner as the 'Tolerants', and that members of the school had a bleak ecclesiastical future unless they were unusually talented.<sup>67</sup>

Thus the Franeker school, or, more precisely, the Vitrangan school, was generally associated with theological moderation within the confessional public sphere. In the early 1770s, one crusader for toleration provided the following list of 'moderate' divines: Vitranga himself, Joan Alberti, Herman Venema, Petrus Conradi, Jan Jacob Schultens, Ewald Hollebeek, Petrus Chevallier, Samuel Manger and Wilhelm Peiffers.<sup>68</sup> The contributions of some of these divines to the Dutch debate on toleration will be discussed elsewhere; their significance follows mainly from the fact that they attempted to elaborate, develop and improve Reformed theology from within, with a view both to clarifying religious truth and also to unifying Christendom. It should suffice to discuss two of these influential Vitrangians. Joan Alberti (1698–1762) had studied at Franeker, where he followed Vitranga's lectures and befriended Venema.<sup>69</sup> Appointed as professor of theology at Leiden in 1740, he soon developed a reputation for being even more heterodox than Venema. He was charged by Comrie and Holtius with introducing the theology of Saumur into the Leiden academy. Alberti refrained from answering them, however, devoting his time to philology instead, and leaving the polemics to his colleague Schultens. Developing certain aspects of Vitranga's theology, Alberti contended that the notion of the covenant of works could be dispensed with as an integral part of Reformed divinity.<sup>70</sup> He also denied the immediate imputation of Adam's sin, believing that corruption was inherited physically, or indirectly, rather than imputed immediately to every person; this argument presupposed an original

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<sup>67</sup> J.L. Overdorp, *Verhandeling over de profetiën des Ouden Verbonds* (1838), I, 91. Similarly [Bosch], *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem*, 150–152, claimed that Venema's colleagues had purposely portrayed him as a heterodox divine, so that his pupils had little success in the church.

<sup>68</sup> Van den Berg, 'Tussen ideaal en realiteit', 237–238.

<sup>69</sup> Van de Sandt, *Joan Alberti*.

<sup>70</sup> For an introduction to federal theology, see Strehle, *Calvinism, federalism, and scholasticism*.

purity of the soul, and thus detracted from the absolute supremacy of divine grace. Alberti also accorded a significant role to reason in theology and faith. He even regarded the new biblical criticism as a means to establish the truth definitively, and thus reunite Christianity.<sup>71</sup> The second Vitrिंगian, Samuel Hendrik Manger (1735–1791), married one of the daughters of Daniel Gerdes and in 1760 succeeded Vriemoet to the oriental languages chair at Franeker.<sup>72</sup> Appointed professor of theology four years later, he was ultimately dismissed in 1788 on account of his Patriot sympathies. He, too, was a typical theologian in the Franeker Cocceian tradition, with an aversion to theological polemics and regularly emphasizing fundamental articles. His address *De diversis remediis ad tollenda Christianorum dissidia adhibitis* (1771) put little faith in colloquies and synods to put an end to discord, and insisted on wisdom, justice and charity instead. By the 1770s, it was apparently safe for a Calvinist academic to applaud Cassander, Erasmus, Bucer and Calixt, who, as Manger observed, had been opposed so bitterly in their pursuit of peace. Manger is characteristic of his generation in that he expected true Christian peace, when it would finally come about, to be the result of providential guidance rather than the doings of men.

### 3.3 THE LAST ECCLESIASTICAL *REGENT*

In the previous section several leading exponents of the Vitrिंगian school were reviewed. Vitrिंगa Sr. himself, Venema, Conradi, Alberti, and Manger can all be understood as advocates of a latitudinarian theology within the admittedly rather slight margins afforded by the eighteenth-century Calvinist church. One significant Vitrिंगian remains to be discussed: the orientalist Jan Jacob Schultens (1716–1778). Schultens has been portrayed as a rather conservative theologian who had no serious problems with Dort, but whose tolerance was exemplary, a man ‘of sound scholarship and mild piety’, a truly enlightened Protestant.<sup>73</sup> There is much truth in these qualifications,

<sup>71</sup> Van de Sandt, *Joan Alberti*, 171.

<sup>72</sup> Witteveen, ‘S.H. Manger’.

<sup>73</sup> Van den Berg, *Een Leids pleidooi voor verdraagzaamheid*; Van den Berg, ‘Kenterend getij’, 182; Van den Berg, ‘The Leiden professors’, 4, 14; J.C. de Bruïne, ‘Schultens, Jan Jacob’, in: *BL I*, 334–335 (Schultens pursued ‘real toleration’).

but to picture Schultens as a principled man of commendable moderation is to tell half the story. In the following, Schultens will also emerge as the Dutch counterpart to those latitudinarian bishops of the Anglican Church who preferred comprehension and toleration to unconditional liberty, the clerical ambassador of the Erastian *regenten* with whom theocratic Calvinists had had to contend since the beginning of the Revolt, an influential and ambitious theologian, versed in political and ecclesiastical intrigue, and a Saumurian academic with little interest in the contents of the *Canones* of Dort, and even less in their exclusive maintenance. He was, in short, an eminent clerical exponent of the confessional public sphere in its most latitudinarian form. To understand intellectual debates in an age used to ambiguity as a means of disguise, it is often fruitful to take orthodox criticism seriously. After all, the orthodox clergy had developed an expertise, spanning at least a century and a half, of exposing or 'unmasking' religious deviants who tarnished the religious quality of the public by duplicity and equivocation. Thus, as we shall see, Comrie and Holtius claimed to know exactly where Schultens stood. To take their criticism seriously is not to denigrate Schultens' contribution to religious toleration, which, on a practical level, was not inconsiderable. The point is that Schultens did not distinguish himself in any formal way from his *regent* predecessors, in that he believed that practical measures were the best way to force moderation upon an unwilling church, and that a latitudinarian church was a morally satisfactory extension of the confessional public sphere.

Jan Jacob Schultens had been a professor of theology at Herborn in Germany, and came to Leiden in 1749. A skilled Arabist, he was soon appointed to the prestigious office of *Interpres Legati Warnerani* (custodian of a famous oriental manuscript collection), as well as director of the Leiden 'States College' (an institute for theological students of insufficient means, financed by the States of Holland). Jan Jacob was the second in a dynasty of orientalists who founded what has been called the *schola Schultensiana*. Supported by the captains of academia as a 'théologien éclairé, modeste et modéré',<sup>74</sup> Schultens developed, like his father, into an internationally respected scholar. This reputation led to the visit in 1762 of Johann Beckmann

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<sup>74</sup> Quoted in Van den Berg, 'The Leiden professors of the Schultens family', 235.

(1739–1811), who himself later became a renowned economics professor at Göttingen. Beckmann undertook his *Bildungsreise* partly on the advice of the *Abt* Jerusalem at Brunswick, the German luminary who had visited the Republic during the early 1730s. Having done what foreign scholars travelling through Holland were wont to do—making their acquaintance with Lutheran and Walloon ministers in the various towns, visiting the city hall and the brothels at Amsterdam, attending the French comedy and the Prince of Orange’s natural history collection at The Hague—Beckmann in due course arrived at Leiden. A visit to the Academy was mandatory, of course, and Beckmann describes at length its collection of artefacts, curiosities, books and manuscripts. The Leiden academics were also on Beckmann’s list of attractions; among the theologians, the amicable Schultens was indubitably the most famous.<sup>75</sup> For some reason Schultens persuaded Beckmann not to attend his lessons (on polemical theology, a subject of no possible interest to his German visitor, Schultens said), perhaps because he wanted to prevent the latter from spreading gossip in Göttingen. For it was well-known, recounts Beckmann, that Schultens had little regard for Johann David Michaelis, the Göttingen orientalist who in the course of the 1760s and 1770s would all but eclipse Schultens’ fame. A trader in scholarly flatulence (*windverkoopster*) is the expression used by the Leiden scholar to describe his German colleague. After several bottles of wine and some excellent tobacco, Schultens ridiculed the arrogant claim in Michaelis’ commentary on the Letter to the Hebrews that only two people had really understood this book, to wit, the author, Paul, and his interpreter, Michaelis. The latter was an ‘animal scribax, impudens’ who lusted after novelties and was shameless enough to pillage others when he could find none himself. These aspersions, as well as the observation that Michaelis had already outlived his fame, seem to reveal the cordial Schultens as a rather touchy academic. The reservations expressed by Schultens were very probably caused by Michaelis’ criticism of the Dutch school of oriental studies for focusing exclusively on Arabic, and failing to apply their methods to Hebrew.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>75</sup> For Beckman’s visit to Schultens, see Kernkamp, *Johann Beckmann’s dagboek*, 380–387.

<sup>76</sup> J.D. Michaelis, *Beurtheilung der Mittel, welche man anwendet, die ausgestorbene hebräische Sprache zu verstehen* (1757); D.tr. *Overweeging der middelen, waar van men zich bedient, om de Hebreeuwische taal, welke gebruik uitgestorven is, regt te verstaan* (1762), tr. by Christian Albert de la Villette (1726–1770), a Reformed minister of Huguenot descent. On Michaelis, see also section 6.3.

Schultens himself criticized what he considered to be the deficient Hebraic of the English orientalist Benjamin Kennicott, of whose *State of the printed Hebrew text of the Old Testament considered* (1753–1759) he did not have a high opinion.<sup>77</sup>

For all his affability, Schultens seems to have been a rather vain man. His criticism of Michaelis was not the result of any pronounced affection for traditional theology. During his conversation with Beckmann, he did show particular regard for some German scholars, such as Johann Matthias Gesner (1691–1761), the Göttingen philologist; he asked Beckmann to send 30 copies of Gesner's *Præviae lineae isagoges in eruditionem universalem* (1756) to Leiden once he was back in Germany. Another was Jerusalem, who in 1762 was not yet well-known in the Netherlands, and whom Schultens considered to be one of the most reasonable (*vernünftigste*) and courteous among the Lutherans. Schultens claimed to have translated Jerusalem's recent biography of Prince Albrecht Heinrich of Brunswick into Dutch, at the request of Duke Ludwig Ernst of Brunswick himself, who in turn had close connections with the House of Orange.<sup>78</sup> Another German divine was the Göttingen chancellor Mosheim, the greatest of German scholars according to Schultens, and one who had in so excellent a manner applied his 'ingenium philosophicum' to church history. On the other hand, he considered Johann Ernst Schubert, an orthodox Lutheran whose popularity was growing among traditional Dutch divines, as bumptious and shallow. Karl Friedrich Bahrtdt, another German traveller invited into Schultens' study, later provided the following account of his conversation. 'Erst hings über die liebe Theologie her. Der liebenswürdige Alte Spottete ihrer, mit einer Herzlichkeit, die mich entzückte. "Ach was ist das für eine Freude, hub er bei einer Sinkung des Gesprächs an, wenn man hier zu Lande einmal einen Mann zu sehn bekommt, bei dem man ohne Furcht, verkezzert zu werden, sich ausschütten kan!"' Leiden, suggested Bahrtdt, was full of 'vernagelte Orthodoxen (. . .), von denen er seine liberale Gelehrsamkeit verborgen halten mußte, um nicht gepeinigt zu werden.'<sup>79</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Kernkamp, *Johann Beckmann's dagboek*, 382.

<sup>78</sup> *Das Leben des höchstseligen durchlauchtigsten Prinzen Albrecht Heinrichs, Prinzen von Braunschweig und Lüneburg* (1762); the Dutch translation appeared in the same year.

<sup>79</sup> C.F. Bahrtdt, *Geschichte seines Lebens* (1790–1791), III, 294–296. During the conversation, Schultens again took ample opportunity to disparage Michaelis.

Another important source of evidence for Schultens' religious position, particularly during the 1770s, is his correspondence with his friend Rijklof Michael van Goens (1748–1810). For anyone interested in Dutch reverberations of the cosmopolitan High Enlightenment, Van Goens ought to be a celebrity. A professor at Utrecht since 1766 and a magistrate since 1776, this phenomenally erudite mind and member of Dutch high society closely monitored developments in European learning, was well-versed in Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, Wieland, and Hume, to name but a few, and corresponded with contemporary lights such as Cesarotti and Wieland.<sup>80</sup> A letter written by Schultens in 1776 illustrates the general tenor of the correspondence. Schultens asked his friend for information concerning the views of the Utrecht classis on the Jewish convert Christiaan Duytsch. Schultens had heard gossip concerning this 'holy proselyte', and had even perused one of his writings in a bookshop. It seemed so full of enthusiasm and drivel that he had put it aside. The pious had a high regard for Duytsch, Schultens had heard. There was uncertainty as to Duytsch's matrimonial history, answered Van Goens (Duytsch had wedded a Dutch woman while still married to his first wife's sister). The man was a silly enthusiast who would be better off selling cotton or polishing the shoes of Christians than sermonizing to peasants.<sup>81</sup>

A publisher, wrote Van Goens to Schultens in 1777, had recently asked him whether it was worthwhile to translate an anonymous tract 'über die Schwärmerey, Toleranz, etc.' He had given the publisher an affirmative reply, for the book was 'a stone in the new structure of sentiments, built on the ruins of Metaphysics or its atrocious offspring, scepticism.' He felt that Schultens would surely appreciate the book.<sup>82</sup> Van Goens classified Schultens as one of the 'reasonable, moderate, sensible Christians', set apart from the majority of Dutch theologians.<sup>83</sup> Schultens himself agreed, observing that divines like Petrus Hofstede were neither moderate nor modest, and experts in 'artful deception'. In this correspondence between Leiden

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<sup>80</sup> Van Goens admired another of his correspondents, the publicist Christian Adolph Klotz (1738–1771), for his nerve in combating with such perseverance 'la populace theologienne'; quoted in Wille, *Van Goens*, I, 356.

<sup>81</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 19 (Schultens to Van Goens, 17–3–1776) and 21–23 (Van Goens to Schultens, undated, prob. 1777). On Duytsch, see section 2.4 above.

<sup>82</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 31 (Van Goens to Schultens, 4–8–1777).

<sup>83</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, II, 5 (Van Goens to Schultens, 1775).

and Utrecht, Hofstede was referred to as 'Hortens'—probably an allusion to the Roman rhetorician Hortensius (114–50 B.C.), who, like Hofstede, was famed for his flowery language.<sup>84</sup> Schultens' letters are full of gossip about the attempts of the orthodox clergy to dominate the church to eliminate presumed heresies. During one controversy, for example, Schultens observed that the church would not regain its peace for at least three years, since the orthodox would 'intrigue furiously' until the culprit in question had been evicted and confessional ties reinforced. A hundred years ago, the clergy had begun to suppress the Cocceians, beginning with Abraham Heidanus.<sup>85</sup> Now they had begun to sacrifice even Voetians, as a warning to the 'Tolerants'. In his view (and this had long since been the view of Remonstrant critics), Heidanus was one of the first 'Tolerants', duly followed by Bekker and Röell. Schultens wrote to his young friend:

I still hold the view that the *Hierarchs* forcefully stimulate the *Tolerance* which they want to reverse. The more victims they make the faster that hateful plague will be spread. (. . .) To me it is pleasant to see that the fellows who aspire to be the principal Actors in this game are always people of the kind of temper you characterized correctly, using Mosheim's church history.

Mosheim, of course, had often ascribed ambition to the clergy. Schultens was optimistic about the future. Within thirty years, he said, people would laugh at the controversies now shaking land and church. He applied a metaphor to those two aspects of Dutch society he apparently found most offensive: despotism and ecclesiastical hierarchy. These were no longer united as man and wife, he observed, but even if they were, the woman (the church) would have to be very careful not to dominate the man (the state). Schultens evidently favoured an Erastian, magisterial policy vis-à-vis the church.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>84</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 6 (Schultens to Van Goens, 1776).

<sup>85</sup> Seventeenth-century Cocceians like Heidanus can be seen as representatives of a moderately diversified (but emphatically orthodox) confessional public. Hence, even the memory of the virulent anti-Arminian Heidanus played a part in the Dutch toleration debate. Stünstra referred to Heidanus' statement on confessions, that 'no one is obliged to sign unless he has found them to be in accordance with God's Word'; Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 161. This view remained common among eighteenth-century orthodox Cocceians. For a recent attempt to interpret the controversy over Bekker in this light, see Fix, *Fallen angels*.

<sup>86</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 7–8 (Schultens to Van Goens, 1776) and 11 (Schultens to Van Goens, undated, prob. 1777).



Schultens described his 'intolerant Brothers' as a faction attempting to dominate the regional classis, which itself was really nothing more than a 'pleasure party for the clergy'. His adversaries were successful, for in 1776 this particular classis was controlled by five orthodox Voetians, including Hofstede's friend Johannes Habbema (1732–1800). During the proceedings, recounted Schultens, Habbema had studiously avoided entering into a conversation with him—a characteristic sign of the cowardice of these orthodox clerics, he thought. Habbema was the *praeses*, the president of the classis, and not a very able one. But then, noted Schultens, it was quite irrelevant whether a man of honour and virtue or a man of intrigue and ambition chaired a synod. Habbema, Hofstede's puppet, had only become president through artifice anyway. His physiognomy was indifferent, though slightly inclined to falsehood, and his character shallow and parochial. Addicted to his party and well-versed in the plots and pranks of a clergy infatuated with the desire to dominate, Habbema was capable of thorough duplicity, all the more so since he was guided by the head of his faction, the highly competent Hofstede. In a postscriptum, Schultens enjoined his correspondent to throw his letter into the fire after having read and deliberated on it.<sup>87</sup>

Schultens clearly distinguished his own position within the church from that of Cocceians of Van den Honert's variety, upon whom he looked with a mixture of pity and dislike. He informed Van Goens that Hofstede had connections with a certain Henricus Spijkers (1720–1788), a well-meaning and friendly minister with a talkative disposition, but in the end a mere 'Cocceian or Honertian wretch, oaf, or duffer'.<sup>88</sup> Elsewhere, Schultens observed that Johannes le Franc van Berkhey (1729–1812), a noted Orangist and poet, was a boor whose conceitedness, jealousy and maliciousness was unsurpassed. Berkhey flattered the orthodox clique in Rotterdam, and Schultens believed that his mad zeal for Orange went hand in hand with hatred of Remonstrants.<sup>89</sup> On the other hand, Schultens was rather

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<sup>87</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 11–16 (Schultens to Van Goens, undated, prob. 1777). Cf. 17 (Schultens to Van Goens, 17–3–1776), on the intolerant cabal led by Hofstede and Habbema, whose sole purpose is to foster strife and dissension and transform misplaced zeal into raging madness.

<sup>88</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 17–18 (Schultens to Van Goens, 17–3–1776). Spijkers was a minister at Haarlem.

<sup>89</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 19–20 (Schultens to Van Goens, 17–3–1776). In 1773 Le Franc van Berkhey became the first lector in natural history at the Leiden

critical of the new radical light that had risen over the horizon of Dutch religious dissent, the Unitarian Joseph Priestley. He assured Van Goens that he would read Priestley's writings coolly and without irritation, even if they should prove to be insufferably radical. Despite these reservations, Schultens did not seem particularly worried about Unitarianism. He welcomed Edward Harwood's *Greek Testament*<sup>90</sup>—a translation replete with Arian heresies that, he claimed, had been immediately sold out in Leiden. But Arianism was on the wane in England, and Socinianism on the rise. Schultens expected the Unitarian radicals such as Priestley and Lindsey to make a great number of proselytes. He also observed, apparently not without approval, that the Berlin theologian Wilhelm Abraham Teller (1734–1804) closely followed the Unitarian confession of the Transylvanians, which had been reprinted recently and presented to the emperor. The emperor, incidentally, had discussed this confession for a full forty-five minutes with a Unitarian from Klausenberg with whom Schultens had been acquainted in his youth.<sup>91</sup> The time will come, prophesied Schultens, that discussions on Arianism and Unitarianism will be as fashionable in the Netherlands as in England, Switzerland and Germany. If even rigid Scots had been unable to turn the Arian tide, how long would it take to undermine the Synod of Dort? Three decades? Sixty years? A century? Schultens, who was

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Academy, until he was fired in 1795 on account of his Orangist sympathies. He was repeatedly censured by the church council for his concubinage with a woman who bore him seven children but whom he was unable to marry because the authorities did not recognize his earlier divorce.

<sup>90</sup> Schultens is apparently referring to *He Kaine Diatheke* (1776), a reconstruction of the New Testament by the Arian dissenter and scholar of reknown, Edward Harwood (1729–1794). Harwood was a friend of the Goodrickes (see section 3.3 below), who in turn were friends of the Schultens dynasty; Van den Berg, 'The Leiden professors', 246. Cf. Harwood's *Cheerful thoughts on the happiness of a religious life* (1766); D.tr. *Vrolijke gedachten over het geluk van een godsdienstig leven* (1775); an author in *NB* 1776-i, 99–101, regarded the book as insulting to the Reformed Church on account of Harwood's crude rejection of predestination. Schultens was also satisfied that his orthodox colleagues had not attempted to outlaw two books. One was the *Key to the apostolic writings* (1745) by the erudite dissenter and pupil of Samuel Clarke, John Taylor (1694–1761); D.tr. *Sleutel der apostolische geschriften* (1769). Taylor's *The Scripture doctrine of atonement* (1751) had appeared earlier as *Verhandeling van het leerstuk der verzoening* (1754), when it was immediately accused of Socinianism and forbidden. The other book mentioned by Schultens was Guillaume-Thomas Raynal's anti-clerical *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissemens et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (1722); D.tr. *Wysgeerige en staatkundige geschiedenis* (1775–1783). See *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 11 (Schultens to Van Goens, undated, prob. 1777).

<sup>91</sup> A certain Stephan Ay.

60 years of age when he wrote this letter, did not expect to witness the inevitable abolition of the doctrinal exclusivity of orthodox Calvinism. However, Van Goens, who was twenty-eight, had every chance of observing the demolition of Dort.<sup>92</sup>

This, then, was the man whom Comrie and Holtius had attacked as ‘Pantanechomenus’, he who forbears everything, a nickname which Schultens himself did not find disagreeable. Schultens has received much attention for his defence of a friend, Anthonie van der Os (1722–1807), a Reformed minister deeply in trouble with his church council and ultimately dismissed in 1755.<sup>93</sup> Influenced by the English latitudinarian Simon Patrick,<sup>94</sup> Van der Os had contended that justification was the result of faith, thus seeming to imply that a man could work out his own salvation. His former tutor, Van den Honert, defended him, as did Schultens, while Comrie and Holtius in their *Examination of the plan concerning toleration* vigorously opposed him. Were the latter correct in calling Schultens a crypto-Arminian? In 1754, Schultens countered Comrie and Holtius in his *New Year’s gift to two supporters of the formularies*, defending both Van der Os and the Remonstrants.<sup>95</sup> He claimed in the book to be prepared to defend the Arminian system against any false accusations, but that his opponents would be hard put to find even the slightest inclination towards Arminianism in his own writings. He even declared explicitly that there was ‘not a single *Remonstrant*, or *Menmonite*, with whom I have ever, either in word or writing, taken steps towards a union of Doctrine.’<sup>96</sup> Of course, if Schultens had taken such steps, he would hardly have said so in a book in which he tried to disqualify on a public forum the two most infamous arch-Calvinists of the 1750s. Moreover, as a Leiden academic he had the troublesome South Holland Synod in his near vicinity, and the awesome Van den Honert still breathing down his neck. Schultens was naturally reserved in his letters to correspondents with whom he was not well acquainted. In his first significant letter to a leading Arminian, the highly respected scholar Cornelis Nozeman (1721–1786), he was careful to stress the

<sup>92</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 26–28 (Schultens to Van Goens, 24–3–1776).

<sup>93</sup> Bosch, *Het conflict rond Antonius van der Os*.

<sup>94</sup> S. Patrick, *The parable of the Kingdom* (1664); D.tr. *De geschiedenis van den reiziger naar het hemelsche Jeruzalem* (1746).

<sup>95</sup> *Nieuwejaarsgift aan twee voorstanders der formulieren* (1754).

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Van den Berg, ‘Kenterend getij’.

fact that they held very different doctrinal views. He hoped that Remonstrants and Mennonites would not be guided by blind prejudice regarding Counter-Remonstrants, and added:

You can also rest assured that my aim is not to unify the divided Brothers, since I regard this as impossible, not *vitio causae, sed vitio hominum*. Blind religious hatred is so ingrained in both parties, that it is humanly speaking impracticable to heal the breach, which has aged.<sup>97</sup>

A prudent letter, although an orthodox divine would never have called an Arminian a 'Brother'—a term which Calvinist conservatives exclusively reserved for Lutherans. Schultens was given indirect support by the anonymous writer of a preface, who refuted the allegation (made by Comrie and Holtius) that the Walloon church had deteriorated into a hoard of Pelagians. This writer, who used his preface to combine universal and particular grace in Salmurian vein, countered the 'Old Calvinians' with a translated sermon by a Swiss theologian, Nicolaus Zaff (1665–1727).<sup>98</sup>

Schultens was certainly not an opponent of confessions as such, but it is probably safe to assume that he personally favoured the mediating theology of Saumur, as Comrie and Holtius insinuated, and that he favoured the idea of a comprehensive Protestant church containing Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants and, especially, everything in between. He did not believe in 'syncretizing' the various doctrinal positions but valued, as many lenient *regenten* before him had done, a broad church encompassing various Protestants within the broad Reformed tradition. The auction catalogue of Schultens' library reveals what was probably the most complete collection of *irenica* in the eighteenth-century Netherlands.<sup>99</sup> Even if the catalogue were the only source we had concerning Schultens' views, it would still be hard not to conclude that he stood in the tradition

<sup>97</sup> Quoted in Van den Berg, 'Kenterend getij', 183. Nozeman replied in similar vein, praising Schultens for his opposition to orthodox ambition and foolishness and for his defence of the Protestant values of moderation and liberty; ms Leiden BPL 127 AD1, letters by Nozeman to Schultens, dd. 16–3–1754 and 16–11–1754. Nozeman was a Remonstrant minister at Rotterdam since 1760 and had earned a reputation as an expert in natural history. Like his opponent Hofstede, he was showered with distinctions in the course of an active life as contributor to various contemporary societies.

<sup>98</sup> N. Zaff, *De weg tot de vrede der kerke, of tot christelyke verdraagzaamheid* [*The way to ecclesiastical peace, or to Christian forbearance*] (1754).

<sup>99</sup> *Bibliotheca Schultensiana* (. . .), Leiden 1780.

of latitudinarian magistrates, who ever since the Synod of Dort had been obliged to tack between Arminian intellectuals, who produced the persuasive ideals, and the Calvinist clergy, who held the approbation of the populace. The catalogue mentions, among many other things, an immense collection of items dealing with the Arminian controversy of the early seventeenth century—some 600 writings divided over 26 portfolios. Furthermore, the catalogue is riddled with *Irenica*, *Viae ad pacem*, *Paces ecclesiasticae*, *Theologiae pacificae*, *Consensus veritatis* and *Uniones* by most of the leading lights of Christendom.

Schultens was not in any hurry to put the clock back to the days of Arminius. His first goal was a covert vindication of Saumur. Hence his claim that he did not pursue Christian unity, and his expectation that Van Goens would witness events he himself could only dream about. What Schultens tried to do—and his actions illustrate this—was to use his influence in the church organization as well as his many personal contacts to moderate, so to speak, the confessional public sphere from within. If all Christians respected each other's doctrinal views, in time a comprehensive church would come about of its own accord. Schultens hoped to fortify his own party in the church in the name of peace, charity and concord. As he wrote to an influential orthodox preacher in a rather pathetic but prudent letter:

To me it is a certain matter that *Nicodemism* (...) is more dominant in our church and among our Ministers than one may think; and it seems to me that *Nicodemism* among ecclesiastics is at least as dangerous as the *Gallicanism* of which (...) some less moderate ecclesiastics accuse politicians.<sup>100</sup>

Schultens, in other words, wished to bring out into the open theological views that had been dormant or repressed since Dort. After consulting Herman Venema, who suggested that he himself might contribute with translations of authors who kept to the middle between Calvinism and Arminianism, Schultens began a concerted action to tip the balance in favour of a latitudinarian church.<sup>101</sup> During the

<sup>100</sup> MS Leiden BPL 127 AD1, Schultens to Johannes Beukelman (1704–1757), dd. 7–5–1755.

<sup>101</sup> MS Leiden BPL 127 AD1, Venema to Schultens, dd. 5–10–1753. Venema suggested translating a work by Barthold Holtzfus (1659–1717), a theology professor at Frankfurt an der Oder, *Tractatus theologicus de praedestinatione, electione et reprobatione hominum, ad promovendam concordiam ecclesiasticam* (1702); a Latin edition did

Van der Os affair he sent copies of his *New Year's gift* (1754) and *Warning against the explanation of the Catechism by Alexander Comrie* (1755) to as many clergymen as he could find (including church councils in the major towns and theological faculties), in an attempt to strengthen and extend his own clerical clientele. It must have cost him a small fortune. The dogmatic views which Schultens defended in these publications were moderately orthodox, and generally perceived as an exoneration of Vitringa, Venema, Alberti, and ultimately also Amyraut.<sup>102</sup> Schultens received declarations of support in a deluge of letters in Dutch and Latin that ranged from the obsequious to the laudatory, but also provoked reactions that were non-committal at best and politely dismissive or admonitory at worst.<sup>103</sup> Replies were sent from influential towns and backwater villages by ministers both obscure and famous, some of them apparently belonging to Van den Honert's personal network of Cocceian contacts. Some writers confessed they had not yet read the book, but denounced the 'Old Calvinians' anyway; others, having obediently expressed their adherence to the good cause, requested Schultens to keep an eye on their offspring who had just entered the Leiden Academy; one Bogislaus Cassius composed a poem 'in scripta polemico-irenica viri celeberrimi Johannes Jacobi Schultens'; several divines included heartfelt prayers, and one a smoked salmon; others offered to provide leading magistrates with copies of the book. The spectre of separatism and the need for ecclesiastical concord figures largely in many letters, often with reference to the way Roman Catholics might take the opportunity of exploiting Calvinist dissension. Even the orthodox Cocceian Barueth condemned Comrie's 'despicable heresy-hunt' on this account, and applauded Schultens' pursuit of concord in the Reformed Church.<sup>104</sup> Venema, the then leader of the Franeker

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appear at Leiden 1756. Venema had also recommended *Orthodoxa declaratio articulorum trium de mortis Christi sufficientia et efficacia* (1642), by Hermann Hildebrand (1590–1649), a theology professor at Bremen.

<sup>102</sup> See e.g. the letter by J. Hinlôpen, who admonished Schultens for not explicitly rejecting foreign theologians who were known to deviate from the pure doctrine; see MS Leiden BPL 127 AD1, 21–2–1755. Attempting to bathe in Vitringa's glory, Schultens had his father's obituary on Vitringa translated, with the approval of Venema; MS Leiden BPL 127 AD1, letter by Venema, dd. 5–10–1753.

<sup>103</sup> See the many letters to Schultens dated 1754 and 1755 in MS Leiden BPL 127 AD1.

<sup>104</sup> Schultens was later embroiled in a conflict with Barueth, who intended to publish Albert Schultens' lecture notes without having requested his son's permission.

school, replied via his colleague Conradi, so that Schultens could not be accused of forming a faction in the church. Conradi observed that Van den Honert himself could hardly disapprove of the book, but that he would grind his teeth nonetheless, since it was clear that Schultens was covertly refuting the doctrine of imputation that Van den Honert himself had defended in his *Adam and Christ*.<sup>105</sup>

Schultens was undoubtedly a tolerant man. He was also an ecclesiastical *regent* who valued foreign scholars for their learning as much as for their social status; an elitist urban Cocceian who preferred the international glory brought by philology and linguistics to reworking received doctrine, but who otherwise evinced little interest in contemporary theological developments; an impetuous critic with an evident disdain for the orthodox conservatives who laboured hard to preserve the declining authority of Dort; a divine, finally, who sympathized with a public church that was broadly Reformed rather than strictly Calvinist, and firmly under control of latitudinarian clerics and lenient magistrates. By the 1760s and 1770s, however, the high-handed, magisterial pursuit of toleration of which he was an eminent clerical representative, had become all but outmoded. Ecclesiastical *regenten* would soon be out of fashion.

### 3.4 PREROGATIVES UNDER DISPUTE

The various views on doctrine and toleration examined in the preceding three sections demonstrate the existence of different currents within the eighteenth-century Reformed church. Another much contested issue that should be discussed here, since it frequently had a direct bearing on the toleration debate, was the nature and degree of secular control over the public church. Disputes concerning the prerogatives of the civil authorities focused particularly on the legit-

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Schultens Jr. was particularly indignant when Barueth wrote to him that he hoped that the lecture of Schultens Sr. would contribute to the thwarting of Pelagianism; questioned by Schultens, Barueth claimed that he had not meant that Pelagianism was on the rise among Calvinist ministers and professors. As Barueth well knew, this denial was at odds with his wish to publish the orthodox lecture notes of a Reformed divine. See the *Briefwisseling tusschen (. . .) Jan Jacob Schultens (. . .) en Johan Barueth*, Dordrecht 1776.

<sup>105</sup> Van den Honert, *Adam en Christus*; a learned exposition of traditional covenant theology, confuting C. Vitringa Jr. and Venema.

imity or extent of the magistracy's influence on the appointment of ministers to ecclesiastical office. The discussions resembled those on patronage in Scotland, where the 'popular' Calvinist party tended to empower the congregation and the 'Moderate' party generally supported the landowners. In the Netherlands, such discussions were frequently though not invariably related to the tensions between Voetians and Cocceians. They also had a bearing on the toleration debate, since clergymen who favoured magisterial influence sometimes supported greater latitude in the church. Conflicts over the nature of secular authority *circa sacra* were, of course, as old as the Republic itself. This section will discuss these conflicts as they resurfaced in the eighteenth century. First several comments will be made on the relations between the various theological schools (mainly the Voetians and Cocceians) on the one hand, and political factions on the other; subsequently, two related debates that took place during the 1750s will be looked at more closely, with particular regard for a latitudinarian treatise written by the *regent* Daniel van Alphen.

Generally speaking, Voetians were predisposed to stress the relative autonomy of the church, whereas Cocceians to some extent lent support to the Erastian predisposition of republican, states-oriented (*staatsgezinde*) magistrates. This is a helpful rule of thumb when connecting theological with political practice. Neither the Voetians nor Cocceians were, however, very consistent in applying their theory. A case in point was the Stadtholder's personal discretion in influencing or pushing through the appointment of ministers. Voetian influence had been on the wane during the so-called 'stadtholderless' period between 1650 and 1672 and thus, through the complex workings of Dutch politics, the princes of Orange tended to espouse the Voetian cause. Consequently, in the latter decades of the seventeenth century, Voetian influence in the church increased. William III favoured the Voetians out of personal preference, but politically the existence of Voetian factions was helpful in his attempt to thwart the power of the states-oriented groups. A document discovered in Rotterdam in 1690 showed how two local *regenten* pledged to support political decisions advantageous to the Stadtholder as well as to endorse Voetianism in the church.<sup>106</sup> Another telling example concerns Johannes

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<sup>106</sup> Van der Bijl, 'De tweedracht van voetianen en coccejanen in politiek perspectief', 85.



van der Waeyen (1639–1701), a minister at Middelburg in Zeeland who married the daughter of an immensely wealthy, states-oriented magistrate with Cocceian leanings—a wedlock that was duly followed by Van der Waeyen’s own formal conversion to Cocceianism and his dismissal as a minister at the behest of the Stadtholder.<sup>107</sup> After William III came to power, Voetian town pastors and professors were appointed at Leiden. Subsequent to William’s death, however, the Cocceian Franciscus Fabricius (1663–1738) was made town pastor; to insiders this would not have come as a surprise, since Fabricius was the brother-in-law of a powerful burgomaster.

It would be wrong, however, to conclude from this that the Voetians were always Orangist and that the Cocceians were not. The parties were dependent on the policies, aims, ambitions or whims of powerful *regenten*, who could favour either faction for different reasons. Moreover, the policies of the magistrates as well as the Stadtholders were not aimed at taking things to extremes. The Stadtholder’s traditional power base in the church was certainly Voetian, but not exclusively so. Usually the prince was more interested in keeping the balance. Williams IV and V continued to support the Voetians by putting to good use their stadtholderly prerogatives, which, especially after 1747, were neither trifling nor few. In Groningen, for instance, the Stadtholder possessed the honorary title of *rector magnificentissimus*, which enabled him to influence the appointment of academics there. Alternatively, it was rumoured that the Voetian Johannes Egers (1696–1755) had obtained his academic position at Leiden by political intrigue, in particular through the influence of the Amsterdam magistrate.<sup>108</sup> William V patronized Voetians partly because the Cocceians were simply the most powerful clerical group, who maintained complex networks among local magistrates. Besides, the Voetians were supported by substantial sections of the populace. Charles Bentinck, one of the Stadtholder’s counsellors, and certainly no friend of the Voetians (let alone the clergy as such) wrote in 1750: ‘On ne sent pas assez, qu’il est nécessaire de faire plaisir à ces gens là’.<sup>109</sup> Yet, William V did not advocate Voetians indiscriminately. He once

<sup>107</sup> Van Sluis, ‘Het omzwaaien van Johannes van der Waeyen’, 95–103.

<sup>108</sup> Van den Berg, ‘Willem Bentinck’, 171. Bentinck, the right-hand man of Stadtholder Willem V, noted that Egers was held in disrespect at the Leiden Academy, and that he was regarded as incapable, ignorant and indolent.

<sup>109</sup> Quoted in De Jongste, ‘Conflicten rond predikantsbenoemingen’, 95.

observed tactfully that an 'ultra pietist' (*supra fine*) would not do very well in cosmopolitan The Hague.<sup>110</sup> Many Cocceians commended themselves to the prince. Barueth, a Cocceian pastor at Dordrecht (which in the recent past had been anti-Orangist) even tried unsuccessfully to use his connections at court to bring about a purge.<sup>111</sup> Princess Anna, the widow of William IV, had a penchant for recommending Voetians to magistrates and church councils, but no compunction at all in endorsing Cocceians when the candidates in question were sufficiently Orangist in their political leanings.

The power of local magnates in the Dutch Republic resulted from a complex compound of political, social and economic factors, and was strengthened and transferred to subsequent generations through kinship and marriage. Town oligarchies attempted to create groups of loyal supporters and followers within the governing bodies, giving rise to political factions, and tried to develop clienteles of burghers lower down on the social scale. One practice that evolved during the eighteenth century, neatly illustrating the oligarchic nature of republican government, was the use of so-called *contracten van correspondentie* ('contracts of correspondence'). These were oral or written agreements among the magistrates regulating the appointment of members to town councils and the division of lucrative offices and emoluments. If anything, family relationships and political factions had become all the more important in the eighteenth century. If an extensive prosopography combining both ecclesiastics and magistrates were ever attempted, the result would doubtless be revealing. It is in any case clear that the clergy themselves used the same means and methods as the magistrates to maintain and extend their ecclesiastical power base. The Cocceian 'faction' in the Leiden church council drafted its own *contract van correspondentie*, gaining the support of deacons who hoped for promotion to the status of elder.<sup>112</sup> The Leiden Cocceians, with Joan van den Honert as their undisputed leader since 1734, were able to exert a strong influence on policies regarding the appointment of ministers and the division of ecclesiastical offices and finances. The Voetian part of the church population obviously resented the hold of the Cocceian faction on the church council, which resulted in petitions to the newly installed

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<sup>110</sup> Quoted from a letter (1771) in Schutte, 'Beschermer van Gods kerk', 141.

<sup>111</sup> De Jongste, 'Conflicten rond predikantsbenoemingen', 83.

<sup>112</sup> Van Poelgeest, 'Cocceianen en Voetianen in Leiden', 109.

Stadtholder in 1747. William IV died in 1751, however, and as late as 1754 Van den Honert succeeded in strengthening the Cocceian faction by having his nephew by marriage appointed as a member of the clergy. Characteristically, Van den Honert and his faction leaders were described in a 1748 pamphlet as the ‘chiefs of a spiritual house of intrigue.’<sup>113</sup> Van den Honert himself was, of course, the son of another theology professor at Leiden, Taco Hajo, and we need only think of the Schultens dynasty to appreciate how important family relations in the church could be.

There was a similar Cocceian faction at Delft in Holland, where the magistracy in 1725 refused to approve a minister because they objected to the scheming and plotting involved in the appointment of blood relatives rather than able ministers.<sup>114</sup> At Middelburg in Zeeland, the situation was no better. Though the church council here was traditionally a bastion of the Voetian clergy, the Cocceians were able to establish a permanent majority in the 1720s by organizing two so-called ‘friendships’ (a euphemism for factions), both of which were Cocceian. By closely working together, they effectively silenced the Voetian camp. The benevolent Voetian pietist Bernard Smytegelt (1665–1739) was so angered by what he regarded as vulgar intrigue that he denounced his colleagues as deceivers lusting after worldly goods. His criticism led to the Cocceian faction censoring his writings.<sup>115</sup> Voetian criticism was rather sanctimonious, though. As late as the second half of the century Petrus Hofstede, one of the (Voetian) leaders of late eighteenth-century confessional orthodoxy, still made use of his connections with the Stadtholder to recommend a family member.<sup>116</sup> Indeed, by the 1740s, many were fed up with the ecclesiastical *kuyperijen* or intrigues of the Cocceians in particular, but the point is that they could hardly be avoided. Kinship and networks were the oil of the politico-religious establishment in a state where policies were largely made, obstructed or neglected at a local level. The main concern of both magistracy and Stadtholder, was religious peace and quiet, and to obtain this it was necessary to give Voetians as well as Cocceians their rightful due. At the behest of town governments, church councils regularly com-

<sup>113</sup> Van Poelgeest, ‘Cocceianen en Voetianen in Leiden’, 109, 112.

<sup>114</sup> De Jongste, ‘Conflicten rond predikantsbenoemingen’, 92.

<sup>115</sup> Post, ‘Machtsmisbruik in Middelburg’.

<sup>116</sup> Schutte, ‘Beschermer van Gods kerk’, 149.

plied by making arrangements—*vredesontwerpen* or ‘peace schemes’—between the parties, enabling divines from the various schools to alternate. In this way, unrest could be avoided, according to a formal contract drawn up in The Hague in 1719.<sup>117</sup> It seems that after 1738 the small number of Voetians in the church grew slightly because of such contracts and peace schemes. When vacancies had to be filled at the Leiden academy in the 1760s, the board even took into account four different currents, rather than the traditional two: ‘Vitringsians’, ‘Leiden’ Cocceians, ‘Serious’ Cocceians or ‘Lampeans’, and Voetians.<sup>118</sup> The contract concluded at The Hague was destroyed in 1767 by government order, but only so that vacancies could now be divided over three groups, Cocceians, Voetians and those of the ‘Serious’ inclination.<sup>119</sup>

The fragmentation of power in the Dutch Republic generally strengthened the hold of local magistrates over the church. A certain Colonel John Erskine, a Jacobite Scot, wrote from Holland in 1728: ‘What looks likest Erastianism in the Church of Holland is the power the Magistracy of a town has to reject the election of a Min[iste]r made by the Consistory (. . .).’<sup>120</sup> The secular authorities usually had their way, irrespective of the specific powers attributed to them in ecclesiastical theory. If they really wanted a specific minister, they usually got him. A proficient accomplice in ecclesiastical politics like Van den Honert Jr. cooperated willingly with the Leiden magistrate as long as they favoured Cocceian predominance. However, when Princess Anna forced the Leiden magistrate in 1754 to add a Voetian minister to the clergy, Van den Honert rejected such recommendations as illegitimate, mobilized his adherents, set up a defence, and bit the dust only after a long and bitter struggle.<sup>121</sup> As was noted previously, Cocceians tended to support a mild form of ‘Erastian’ rule more easily than traditional Voetians. The latter were perfectly aware that the Stadtholders, if left to their own devices, were as Erastian in their policies as any self-respecting German

<sup>117</sup> De Witte van Citters, *Contracten van correspondentie*, 310–326; De Jongste, ‘Conflicten rond predikantsbenoemingen’, 69–70; Streng, “‘Tot maintain van de soevereiniteit’”, 177.

<sup>118</sup> Van den Berg, ‘Willem Bentinck’, 173.

<sup>119</sup> De Jongste, ‘Conflicten rond predikantsbenoemingen’, 71, 100.

<sup>120</sup> Quoted in Fawcett, *The Cambuslang Revival*, 138.

<sup>121</sup> Van Poelgeest, ‘Cocceianen en Voetianen in Leiden’. The candidate was the Voetian Johannes van Spaan (1725–1789).

prince;<sup>122</sup> as we have seen, they often undermined their own principles (as their Cocceian adversaries sometimes delighted to point out) by appealing to the civil authorities.<sup>123</sup> Again, theory and practice seldom coincided. The established church councils tended to reject interference because it disturbed relations built up over time; minorities welcomed interference because it enabled them to keep or obtain their position within the establishment.

Discussions on the extent of civil authority *circa sacra* had a bearing on the Dutch toleration debate insofar as the stress on secular authority over the church tended to reduce the church's independence, and thus curb clerical power. On the other hand, greater magisterial influence did not necessarily imply more toleration. This is illustrated by a conflict at Rotterdam between 1755 and 1757, where the magistrates had requested the church council to choose someone of local descent, suggesting Petrus Nieuwland (1722–1795) as an appropriate candidate. The council responded by observing that the magistracy had no right to influence the nomination of candidates to vacancies. Ultimately the council took the matter to the States of Holland; the local magistrates lost their suit and Nieuwland was not chosen. In this conflict Van der Groe, the popular Voetian and pietist preacher who had married into a wealthy Rotterdam family, supported the freedom of the church from magisterial influence. His main opponent was the Rotterdam minister Petrus Hofstede, also a Voetian. Hofstede published a defence of his views in 1756 after having been accused of 'pernicious *Erastian*' tenets in a text purportedly written by Van der Groe.<sup>124</sup> Hofstede argued that the right to call ministers, the *ius vocandi*, belonged to the congregation as a whole, and that the congregation as such consisted of the magistracy, the clergy, and the people. These three groups shared the right to call ministers; the clergy could not claim the right all for its own, as Van der Groe seemed to contend. However, the *ius vocandi* was not always exercised in the way it had originally been imple-

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<sup>122</sup> Schutte, 'Beschermer van Gods kerk', 146, notes that in his German territory of Nassau, William V simply dictated the inclusion of a number of songs in the hymn book of the state church.

<sup>123</sup> Such as Van den Honert, who during the 1754 conflict cited Voet's theory on the relations between church and state.

<sup>124</sup> *Het recht der Rotterdamsche kerk* [*The right of the Rotterdam church*] (1756), written together with Herman Bruining (1705–1781); De Bie, *Petrus Hofstede*, 89–96.

mented, claimed Hofstede. In the course of time the *ius vocandi* had devolved variously upon church councils, prominent benefactors of the church (such as the Stadtholder), and civil magistrates as members of the congregation.<sup>125</sup> In Rotterdam, he contended, the church council and the magistracy shared the right to appoint ministers.<sup>126</sup> Van der Groe responded to Hofstede with a translation of the classic Latin treatment of the subject by Gisbert Voet himself.<sup>127</sup> Hofstede in turn observed that Voet was a fallible man and not to be regarded as an oracle. It was the truth that mattered, not famous men or theological schools or even ecclesiastical formularies. Van der Groe, of course, remained unconvinced, and continued to accuse his opponent of propagating a false Erastianism.

Hofstede's arguments, though not Erastian in any strict sense, were contrary to the spirit of the church order established at Dort. More importantly, Hofstede was an Orangist who, like the rejected candidate Nieuwland, maintained close contacts with the Stadtholder. In addition, in 1756, in the midst of the debate with Van der Groe, Hofstede married a widow of local *regent* stock.<sup>128</sup> There was much, then, to predispose him to Erastian views. Apart from such mundane considerations, eighteenth-century divines could draw on theorists who had previously emphasized secular authority over the church. Not all Voetians supported Voet's system of collaterality without reservations (collaterality refers to the co-existence of two autonomous powers in one state, the one political and the other religious). Hofstede himself had referred to *Moses as a god over Aaron* by Johan Cornelis van Bleyswyk (1618–1696), a high-ranking patrician from a leading *regent* family, and an earnest supporter of the puritan 'Further Reformation'. During one of the last major seventeenth-century disputes on the relations between church and magistrate, Bleyswyk had argued that a Christian magistracy, since it is obliged to have the Gospel preached by able men, also has the right to

<sup>125</sup> He refers to Beza, Bullinger, Bucer, and Musculus for the argument that the appointment of ministers by an orthodox Christian magistracy has a divine status. On Musculus, see below.

<sup>126</sup> See De Bie, *Petrus Hofstede*, 96–102.

<sup>127</sup> G. Voet, *De vocatione ministrorum in ecclesiis reformatis* (1637); D.tr. *Schriftmatige en redenkundige verhandeling over de kerkelyke macht* (1756). Daniel van Alphen (BPL 1160, letter to F.A. van der Marck, dd. 28–6–1776) mentions Van der Groe as the writer to the foreword.

<sup>128</sup> De Bie, *Petrus Hofstede*, 114–115.

appoint them.<sup>129</sup> There existed some latitude in orthodox Voetian quarters regarding such adiaphoral matters. For Bernhardinus de Moor (1714–1784), one of the last orthodox Voetian academics, Voet's separation between church and magistrate was too extreme, and he made some allowance for the influence of the magistracy (conveniently, his own brother was a burgomaster at Gouda).<sup>130</sup> Even Comrie, despite his puritan Scottish origins, had in the late 1730s been unable to make up his mind whether his own benefactors, the pious *regenten* of Woubrugge, should be left in possession of the right to nominate candidates for the office of minister.<sup>131</sup> The slightly 'Erastian' tradition within orthodox Calvinism reached back, among others, to Wolfgang Musculus (1497–1563),<sup>132</sup> and surfaced in the seventeenth century in a well-known treatise by Nicolaas Vedelius, *De episcopatu Constantini Magni seu de potestate magistratum reformatorum circa res ecclesiasticas*, a treatise expressing profound distrust of the growing clericalism in the new public church.<sup>133</sup> Franciscus Burman (1628–1679), a Cocceian, continued the tradition in the seventeenth century.

The Rotterdam dispute between the two Voetian brethren was soon enough incorporated into the toleration debate proper. To his translation of Voet's treatise, Van der Groe had added an extensive and anonymous preface 'to lay bare and refute the idle attacks of those who seek to make political the authority of the church, in

<sup>129</sup> Cf. [D. van Alphen], *Het recht der overheden*, 361; J.C. van Bleyswyk, *Mose als een Godt over Aäron* (1689). On Bleyswyk and his dispute with the Voetian puritan Wilhelmus à Brakel, see Los, *Wilhelmus à Brakel*, 172–176; Visser, *Kerk en staat*, II, 406–417; Brienens, 'Johan Cornelisz. van Bleiswijk (1618–1696)'.

<sup>130</sup> Visser, *Kerk en staat*, II, 421–423, on De Moor's *Commentarius perpetuus* (1771). J.J. Schultens relates that De Moor probably pressured his *regent* brother to prevent the approbation of a book by a rival clergyman; *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 9 (letter to Van Goens, 1776). A more equivocal Voetian position is also evident in the views of the pietist Sicco Tjaden (1693–1728); Mallinckrodt, 'De dogmatische piëtist Sicco Tjaden', 45–46.

<sup>131</sup> Honig, *Alexander Comrie*, 106–117. Nicolaas Holtius, who often collaborated with Comrie, was perhaps the most outspoken defender of ecclesiastical independence in the eighteenth century.

<sup>132</sup> Musculus provided a defence of the right of the magistracy *circa sacra* in his *Loci communes theologiae sacrae* (1599), cap. LXIX, 'De magistratibus' (619–647). Bäumlín, 'Naturrecht und obrigkeitliches Kirchenregiment bei Wolfgang Musculus'. Musculus had been quoted by the Leiden magistrate in 1579, in a critique of the proceedings of a synod at which the independence of the church had been strongly emphasized; see Visser, *Kerk en staat*, II, 191–200.

<sup>133</sup> Visser, *Kerk en staat*, II, 374–382; Nobbs, *Theocracy and Toleration*, 108–129.

direct opposition to God's Word and the legal constitution of the Reformed Church.' The legalist argument is particularly prominent in Van der Groe's account, which was addressed to another writer who had now appeared on the scene. Daniel van Alphen (1713–1797), lord of Achttienhoven, was the clerk of the bench of aldermen at Leiden, a creditable historian, and a well-known writer of neo-Latin poetry. The offspring of a ranking patrician family, Van Alphen himself believed to have traced his roots to a noble line of the high Middle Ages; in fact, the Van Alphens were a typical eighteenth-century *regent* dynasty, occupying positions in the magistracy, the upper bureaucracy, and the military. Van Alphen was also a fervent adherent to the republican, states-oriented party. He had little affection for Orangists and even less for the clergy. Van Alphen first put forward his views in an (anonymous) article in a moral weekly, choosing as his motto an indictment of Donatus by the early Christian bishop Optatus.<sup>134</sup> Van Alphen had written his article in response to an affair on which we commented above: the resistance of the Leiden church council, under the leadership of Van den Honert, when asked to appoint a Voetian candidate pushed forward by Princess Anna. Having heard of the conflict at Rotterdam, Van Alphen decided that his Erastian essay was worthy of elaboration. He published this second version independently in 1756, together with a reissue of a seventeenth-century tract on the subject by Lambert Velthuysen. Later in 1756, the greatly elaborated essay—it now comprised some 370 pages in octavo—was published again, anonymously, as *The right of magistrates with regard to ecclesiastical offices*.<sup>135</sup>

The anticlerical tenor of Van Alphen's treatise is pronounced; his account is interspersed with comments on the despicable lusting after power of ecclesiastics who cause strife and discord and who are no better than the Papist hierarchy.<sup>136</sup> God forbid that this land be

<sup>134</sup> *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, VII (1755), 115–130, signed as 'J.C.D.J. Kaiophilus P.V.D.P.C.M.'; Dikaiophilus means 'lover of justice'. The motto is a combination of two passages in Optatus, *Treatise against the Donatists*, III, iii, 3–4, centring on Donatus' rhetorical question: 'Quid est imperatori cum ecclesia?'

<sup>135</sup> [D. van Alphen], *Het recht der overheden* (1756). Two decades later, in a letter to F.A. van der Marck (BPL 1160, dd. 22–12–1775), Van Alphen gave his correspondent permission to make use of his treatise and openly mention his name. It was now well-known that he was its author, since the Remonstrant minister Valk had declared him to be the author ('though not without my prior sanction') in his debate with the Leiden professor Van der Kemp.

<sup>136</sup> The mottos on the reverse of the title page are 1 Tim. 6:3–5 (on those who



ruined by religious dissension and the domineering posture of the church, and that we be bound as slaves to synodal decrees! Van Alphen intended to affirm the legal rights of the magistracy and ensure the obedience of the church and its leaders. He claimed to have no grudge against ecclesiastics, but rejected their habit of wildly slandering their opponents as Socinians, libertines, Machiavellists, and naturalists. Most of these epithets probably applied to himself in some way or other, but he wisely kept his misgivings about public doctrine to himself. In his preface, he played the orthodox church leaders off against each other. He rejected the views of Holtius, who had reacted to the first edition of his book by arguing that the notion of ecclesiastical autonomy was not only fundamentally Reformed but also interwoven with the constitution of the Republic. He parried such arguments by referring his critics to Hofstede's campaign against Van der Groe. To account for his unwillingness to enter into a debate with Reformed divines, Van Alphen simply recommended his readers to examine Jean le Clerc's 'Dissertatione ethica, in qua solvitur hoc problema, an semper respondendum sit calumniis theologorum.'<sup>137</sup> Commenting on the Remonstrant conflicts of the first two decades of the seventeenth century, he observed that all quarrels in the church were the result of the clerical thirst for power. No admirer of the orthodox Calvinist system, he continually emphasized his profound attachment to 'the pure Doctrine of our Church'.<sup>138</sup> Van Alphen was what the orthodox leaders of the 1760s would soon reject as a dissembling 'Tolerant'.

Van Alphen put forward his Erastian argument in eight rather long-winded but informative chapters. In the first chapter,<sup>139</sup> he developed his views on church and state rather conventionally from natural law. Mankind is endowed with reason and therefore obliged to worship God. When mankind left the state of nature, it was necessary to thwart the evil influences of certain individuals by means of contracts. At this point authority over all communal concerns, includ-

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contribute to 'Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth)' and 2 Pet. 2:10–12.

<sup>137</sup> [Van Alphen], *Het recht der overheden*, 'Voorreeden'. J. le Clerc, *Epistolae criticae, et ecclesiasticae*, Amsterdam 1730 (1st ed. 1700), 297–344.

<sup>138</sup> [Van Alphen], *Het recht der overheden*, 55, 58–59; cf. 328–329: he rejects Arminianism, not because the Synod has judged that he should, but because he is inwardly convinced that he must do so.

<sup>139</sup> [Van Alphen], *Het recht der overheden*, 1–59.

ing religion, was accorded to the civil government.<sup>140</sup> With a great many references to classical writers, the Bible, Roman law and the Church Fathers, Van Alphen demonstrated that the heathen peoples did, in fact, consign religious worship to the care of the magistracy. The Christian authorities to whom he appealed at this stage are, interestingly, Wolfgang Musculus and Marco Antonio de Dominis, both noteworthy supporters of Christian concord under magisterial supervision.<sup>141</sup> Secular authorities are permitted to prohibit the public and clandestine dissemination of any doctrines that subvert the state, but are also authorized to grant advantages and privileges to those who profess the dominant, public religion. There are no matters concerning public worship that are not subject to the authority of the magistracy.<sup>142</sup> Van Alphen continued by disputing the theory of collaterality. He quoted Jean Bodin on the impossibility of having two governments with equal sovereign powers in a single state,<sup>143</sup> and cited for similar purposes the *Dissertatio epistolica de jure magistratus in rebus ecclesiasticis* (1669), by Vossius.<sup>144</sup>

In his second chapter,<sup>145</sup> Van Alphen contended that Scripture supports the magistracy's *ius circa sacra*. He demonstrated at length that Moses exercised authority over Aaron and the priests, and that the kings of Judah and Israel continued to do so. The ancient Hebrews accorded this authority to the civil government by 'Natural Moral Law', and there is no reason to suppose that God changed his own fundamental laws in the New Testament. On the contrary, Jesus abolished all ceremonial laws only to affirm the moral law. This, indeed, illustrates the essence of Christianity. It prescribes obedience

<sup>140</sup> Van Alphen slyly quotes T.H. van den Honert's *De waarachtige wegen, die God met den mens houd* [*The truthful ways which God uses towards man*] (1706), I, xvi (on 'political theory'), to the effect that even a harsh government must be obeyed.

<sup>141</sup> Musculus had argued for the union of the Reformed and the Lutherans in Augsburg, before going into exile to Bern, where he became professor of theology. M.A. de Dominis was one of the major irenicists on the Catholic side; Van Alphen quotes from his *De republica ecclesiastica libri X* (1618).

<sup>142</sup> Van Alphen refers to Gerard Noodt, *De religione ab imperio libera* (1706), and J. van den Honert, *De mutua Christianorum tolerantia* (1745).

<sup>143</sup> J. Bodin, *De Republica* (ed. 1586), Lib. I, Cap. 10, 149–150.

<sup>144</sup> A letter by Vossius to Grotius, later published in the well-known Arminian collection of letters, *Praestatum ac eruditorum virorum epistolae* and in the 1701 edition of Vossius' theological works. A summary of the tract can be found in Nobbs, *Theocracy and Toleration*, 49–59; Vossius argued primarily against A. Walaeus, *De munere ministrorum ecclesiae* (1615), which in turn refuted a treatise by Uytenbogaart.

<sup>145</sup> [Van Alphen], *Het recht der overheden*, 59–88.

to natural law in those circumstances in which civil laws prove inadequate. Ecclesiastics are explicitly forbidden to dominate their brothers. The civil magistrate, then, has the authority to repress the devious activities of evil men who seek to disrupt the civil peace by sowing dissension in church or state. The next five chapters advance historical arguments. The Holy Roman Emperors and other princes shared the view that the civil government has jurisdiction over the church. The same position, contended Van Alphen, was held by the medieval counts of Holland and later by the Provincial States of the Republic. Finally, he offered several historical examples illustrating the need to keep the clergy under control and to suppress their inveterate inclination to transcend the bounds of their office and establish an independent collateral authority. All too often, they have given vent to their imperiousness, misleading the congregation and trespassing on the fundamental constitution of the state.<sup>146</sup> According to Van Alphen, theologians of undisputed orthodoxy, such as Peter Martyr, Johannes Piscator, Wolfgang Musculus, David Pareus and William Perkins, had defended the right of the magistracy in sacred matters.<sup>147</sup>

Van Alphen also cited the Cocceian Franciscus Burman, a well-known supporter of magisterial power in the church.<sup>148</sup> Burman, whose orthodoxy was not generally disputed, had organized a so-called 'College of Scholars' (*Collegie der Scavanten*), a group of seventeenth-century Cartesian republicans who, according to a contemporary pamphlet, had been intent on ridding the country of both the Voetians and the Prince.<sup>149</sup> One of the members of this erudite clique was Lambert Velthuysen (1622–1685), a medical practitioner, Cartesian, admirer of Thomas Hobbes, and correspondent of Spinoza. Velthuysen's ideas on toleration were extremely lenient, and not illogically his orthodox adversaries, including Voet himself, rejected him as a Hobbist and an Arminian.<sup>150</sup> Foreshadowing Thomasius in many

<sup>146</sup> [Van Alphen], *Het recht der overheden*, 325–327.

<sup>147</sup> [Van Alphen], *Het recht der overheden*, 115.

<sup>148</sup> [Van Alphen], *Het recht der overheden*, 87–88, 116, 351; Van Alphen refers several times to Burman's classical textbook of Cocceian theology, *Synopsis theologiae, & speciatim oeconomiae foederum Dei* (1671), 2 vols, II, Lib. VIII, cap. x ('De jure & munere Magistratus circa sacra'). On Burman's ideas, see De Visser, *Kerk en staat*, II, 403–405.

<sup>149</sup> Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands Cartesianisme*, 443–446.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Blom, *Morality and causality in politics*, 104–105; Blom treats Velthuysen's moral philosophy at length (101–155).

ways, Velthuysen believed that the state ought to establish public doctrine and worship, but also that each individual should be allowed to believe whatever he wants to believe.<sup>151</sup> Van Alphen notes in his foreword that Velthuysen was a virtuous and respected member of the Utrecht town council, persecuted by the ‘unbearable truculence of authoritarian clerics’ because they supposed him to be a heretic. One of his books, to which the seventeenth-century clergy had already strongly objected, was now translated and reissued by Van Alphen, as an extensive appendage to his own account: *The ministry and the right of the church, determined according to the rules of God’s Word and the grounds of our reformation* (1660).<sup>152</sup> It is hard to believe that Van Alphen was unaware of Velthuysen’s distinctly Arminian and ‘naturalist’ leanings. Be that as it may, he detested the meddling habits of the clergy and ended his treatise with the customary advice that the clergy maintain the peace by treating with sobriety and moderation all disputed points that did not subvert the grounds of Christianity.<sup>153</sup> If anything, Van Alphen was a latitudinarian who had little affection for Dort. As for Van der Groe, he virulently criticized Van Alphen’s intentions and religious leanings. The latter was set on disrupting the ‘Peace of Zion’ and the unity of the Church, he said, and the defence of Erastian and Remonstrant errors could only be regarded as a public shaming of the constitution of the Reformed Church.<sup>154</sup>

Van Alphen’s amicable relations with Jan Jacob Schultens and the controversial law professor Frederik A. van der Marck<sup>155</sup> demonstrate the longevity of the anticlerical tradition that had evolved in the seventeenth century as a magisterial, latitudinarian version of the confessional public sphere.<sup>156</sup> At this point, another of Daniel van Alphen’s

<sup>151</sup> Bohatec, ‘Das Territorial- und Kollegialsystem’, 107–127.

<sup>152</sup> L. Velthuysen, *Het predik-ampt en ’t recht der kerke* (1660).

<sup>153</sup> [Van Alphen], *Het recht der overheden*, 329–331.

<sup>154</sup> [Van der Groe], ‘Voorbericht’, in: Voet, *Schriftmatige en redenkundige verhandeling*, VIII–XVI.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. Van Alphen’s letters to Schultens: ms Leiden BPL 1160, dd. 3–5–1774, 22–12–1775; and to Van der Marck: dd. 3–5–1774, 22–12–1775, 28–6–1776. Schultens himself seems to have planned to publish Van der Marck’s anticlerical *Lectiones Academicæ* after his dismissal; see ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by Van der Marck, dd. 8–6–1773. Schultens’ friend Van Goens later claimed to feel spiritually akin to Van der Marck. Those who had persecuted the latter were bound to attack all those ‘qui pensent raisonnablement’; quoted in Wille, *Van Goens*, I, 308 note. The letters by Van Goens and his correspondents often contain anticlerical comments; see Wille, *Van Goens*, I, 273–274, 315.

<sup>156</sup> Other writings concerned with the magistrates authority *circa sacra* include the

chronies should be mentioned: Petrus Burman Jr. (1713–1778), professor of poetry, rhetoric and history at the Amsterdam *Athenaeum*. Apart from being a highly regarded writer of neo-Latin poetry, Burman was related by marriage to the Amsterdam patriciate, whose states-oriented ideology he eloquently defended in poems on Hugo Grotius, Oldenbarnevelt and the De Witt brothers. He was also the owner of the manor Santhorst, where he and his friends regularly toasted to the ‘true freedom’ guarded by the anti-Orangist oligarchy. Burman’s commitment to republican liberty extended also to religious freedom. When in 1771 he translated a poem by Vondel—on the ‘Cane of Oldenbarnevelt’, the cane used by the Grand Pensionary to climb the scaffold on his way to martyrdom—he, like Van Alphen in the 1750s, revived an old tradition that combined ‘true republicanism’ with religious liberty. His taunts provoked writers who were both Orangist and orthodox, and caused a rather sordid pamphlet war. True to his self-esteem as a libertine, Burman, having had his personal integrity questioned (since he owed his academic position to the membership of a church he chose to disparage), resorted to ridicule. In a *Rhythmus monachus pro Vondelio* (1772) he portrayed himself and his colleagues as the Fathers of the Abbey of Freedom and Toleration, who obeyed the rules of Prior Vondel, and rejected the Calvinist counter-attack as an offspring of the Dominican inquisition. Burman, however, did not intend to follow Oldenbarnevelt to the political scaffold. He was a wealthy aristocrat who preferred not to commit himself when it came to the crunch, and who enjoyed a comfortable life of wine, poetry and gratuitous criticism. Tragedy hit when his daughter, the star of Amsterdam society, was accidentally shot; Burman retired and was heard of no more. If Schultens was the last ecclesiastical *regent*, Van Alphen and Burman were among

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Erastian *Theologi ac jurisconsulti, virorum in Belgio clarissimorum, de disciplina ecclesiastica, recentes commentationes* (1774); according to *NB* 1776-i, 125–139, the theologian’s treatise was authored by Venema. The book also included a rebuttal of Justus Henning Böhmer’s views by Johann Heinrich Meister (or Le Maitre 1700–1781), the Swiss Reformed court preacher to the count of Schaumburg-Lippe at Bückeburg; Meister’s more orthodox defence of ecclesiastical independence was published previously as *Vindiciae disciplinae ecclesiasticae systematis Christocratici* (1737). The *NB* also applauded Meister’s *Quatre lettres sur la discipline ecclésiastique* (1740); D.tr. *Vier brieven over de kerke-lyke tucht* (1773), tr. by Hendrik Jacob Schomaker († 1782), a Dutch jurist and *Geheimrat* of the Prussian king; in this book, Meister debated with Charles-Frédéric Necker (1686–1762), the father of the more famous Jacques.

the last political *regenten* to defend a latitudinarian version of the confessional public sphere.

### 3.5 PRECONDITIONS OF REFORMED IRENICISM

If Dutch Calvinism of the Counter-Remonstrant variety is not usually associated with latitudinarianism, it is not normally connected with 'irenicism' either, taken as the pursuit of concord among the territorial churches of Europe. Yet Calvinist divines were not necessarily opposed to reconciliation, if only to strengthen the confessional public sphere in the face of the external (and, it was often feared, internal) threat posed by international Catholicism. In this section we shall briefly examine early eighteenth-century Calvinist overtures to the Anglican and the Russian Orthodox Church, and then review in greater detail the possibilities for interconfessional dialogue afforded by Reformed thought on fundamental articles. The enormous popularity of Calvino-Lutheran ecumenism justifies reserving this topic for separate discussion in section 3.6.

The Anglican Church, held up by seventeenth-century Arminians from Grotius to Van Limborch as an exemplary model of comprehension, had been able to entice at least some eminent Reformed theologians. One vigorous supporter of Calvinist-Anglican union during the latter decades of the seventeenth century was Frederik Spanheim Jr. (1632–1701).<sup>157</sup> Convinced of the need for *concordia* or at least *tolerantia* among orthodox Protestants, he argued in confessionalist vein for church union under the aegis of politics. His motivation, like that of his orthodox colleague at Leiden, Etienne le Moine (1624–1689), stemmed from the fear of a growing Catholic hegemony in Europe. Spanheim believed that churches could well vary in their organization, from Presbyterian to Episcopalian; he seemed to imply that while the first kind of organization was suitable to a republic, the second functioned best within a monarchy. Spanheim more or less circumvented doctrinal issues, stressing instead an outward concord endorsed by the politico-religious establishment. Ironically, his position as an orthodox Calvinist mirrored that of latitudinarian

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<sup>157</sup> For the following, see Van den Berg, 'Dutch Calvinism and the Church of England'.

Anglicans such as John Tillotson, who favoured comprehension in the Church of England of Anglicans as well as Presbyterians. Queen Mary, who was personally in favour of comprehension, in 1689 requested Spanheim to comment formally on the divisions between the Anglican Church and nonconformist Calvinism. In this exposition, but even more so in material that remained unpublished, Spanheim pronounced a surprisingly mild judgement on the Arminian doctrine favoured by most Anglicans. Both parties, he believed, should have freedom of prophecy. Unimpeachable Calvinists like Jacobus Trigland and Herman Witsius expressed similar lenient views. The former regarded the attempts at comprehension and union as part of a godly design; the latter in particular emphasized his trust in William, the Stadtholder-King. If these divines comprised but a small minority in the Dutch Reformed Church, they did form a prominent one. Above all, their willingness to accept doctrines at variance with the *Canones* of Dort shows that the ideal of Protestant catholicity as a means of bolstering the confessional public sphere at home sometimes overrode mere doctrinal issues. We shall enlarge on the domestic and foreign extensions of the confessional public sphere in this and the following sections.

Calvino-Anglican rapprochement came to nothing. As the political relations between England and the Republic became less intimate after the death of William III, British Anglicans and dissenters became less plausible partners for ecclesiastical union with Dutch Calvinists. There were no powerful monarchs to rally the necessary people and force through decisions; as far as the orthodox established clergies were concerned, irenicist ideals were only viable if they conduced to strengthening the 'national' dominant church. This implied that the pursuit of 'irenicism', apart from being sponsored by the civil authorities, had to be incorporated into the elaborate ecclesiastical machinery of synods, academic approval, and confessional embodiment. For this same reason the informal communications between Russian Orthodoxy and Dutch Calvinism early in the eighteenth century likewise led to nothing. The debate was instigated at the behest of Peter the Great and the powerful burgomaster Nicolaas Witsen of Amsterdam. Such contacts had the particular interest of Peter himself, who, in the opinion of Witsen in a letter written to Leibniz in 1698, was 'very zealous for religion, well educated in the articles of the faith, and versed in Holy Scripture'.<sup>158</sup> Witsen chartered Taco Hajo van den

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<sup>158</sup> Quoted in Cracraft, *Church reform of Peter the Great*, 28.

Honert, who was then a preacher at Amsterdam, to hold discussions with an Orthodox prelate. The letters by Van den Honert Sr. to Witsen were later published by Van den Honert Jr., who may have had his own reasons for demonstrating the religiousness of an older generation of Amsterdam magistrates.<sup>159</sup> In the end, the Czar evinced greater interest in the latitudinarian Gilbert Burnet. Peter's close contacts with Burnet during his sojourn in England in 1698 were at least partly induced by the Czar's particular interest in the English bishop's Erastian views on the authority of Christian emperors over the church.<sup>160</sup>

Reconciliation with Anglicans or the Russian Orthodox was not, then, on the clerical agenda. The contrary is true of reunion with the Lutherans. For Reformed orthodoxy, Calvino-Lutheran ecumenism meant two things. In the first place, it led to a strengthening of the anti-Catholic front in north-western Europe. The Dutch had always looked warily to the south and the southeast, and did so even more since the 'disaster year' of 1672, when France, England, Münster and Cologne had attacked the Republic. Suspicions regarding Roman Catholic France were borne out in 1747, when an army that was still widely regarded as an instrument of the Antichrist once again invaded the Republic and almost captured it.<sup>161</sup> The search for an all-Protestant front against the Roman Church was hardly new, of course, and eighteenth-century divines were still aware of the notable call for an 'amicabilis conventio adversus papatum' by the Heidelberg divine David Pareus (1548–1622).<sup>162</sup> In the second place, the Dutch clergy sought rapprochement with the Lutherans to fortify the confessional public sphere at home. Reconciliation with the Lutherans would reinforce confessional authority as such, improve the clergy's position in the state, generally enhance the international reputation of Calvinism, and contest Catholic hegemony. It would not be too wide of the mark to claim that practically the whole

<sup>159</sup> T.H. van den Honert, *Brieven, aan den weledelen grootagtbaren heer mr. Nicolaas Witsen*, Leiden 1744. An Amsterdam court had rejected the advice of the Leiden theological faculty several years before in the sensational Deurhoff affair; see section 5.3 below.

<sup>160</sup> Cracraft, *Church reform of Peter the Great*, 28–37. Cf. also 47, on Johannes F. Budde, who wrote an *Ecclesia Romana cum Ruthenica irreconciliabilis* (1719) which enjoined Peter to guard his supremacy over the church.

<sup>161</sup> J. van den Honert's unionism had been motivated by the wish to create an anti-Roman front; cf. his *De kerk in Nederland beschouwd, en tot bekering vermaand* [*The church in the Netherlands considered, and urged to conversion*] (1746), 166.

<sup>162</sup> Ritschl, *Das orthodoxe Luthertum*, 254–260.



Dutch established clergy supported Calvino-Lutheran dialogue in some form or other. Christophorus Saxe, a Lutheran professor of antiquities at Utrecht, complained in 1762 that in the Netherlands one could not always be 'sacris publicis alienus' without impunity, and that 'die Akademien in Holland die Orthodoxie lieben.'<sup>163</sup> In theory, however, Dutch Calvinists were committed philo-Lutherans; in practice, those Lutherans who wanted to were welcome to attend Reformed celebrations of the Lord's Supper.

The Dutch Reformed clergy encountered two problems in pursuing nuptials with the Lutherans. Those eighteenth-century Lutherans who entertained ecumenical ideals were usually only able to find points of contact with Anglicans or Dutch Arminians. Moreover, as the century progressed, the more lenient Lutherans tended to uphold less traditional theological views, and were therefore no longer eligible for ecclesiastical matrimony. In the late 1740s, the Reformed clergy were urged to watch out for Lutherans predisposed to Arminianism,<sup>164</sup> and the clergy's alertness regarding the 'Pelagianism' of the German *Neologe* only increased over time. The second problem was that those Lutherans who in the course of the eighteenth century did struggle to preserve a traditional orthodoxy were also more often than not vehemently opposed to Calvinism. Lutherans had always objected to Reformed views on the Eucharist, the personhood of Christ, and predestination; conversely, the Calvinists had constantly suggested that it would be better to initiate discussions rather than condemn each other from the outset. Salomon van Til contended in his *Salem's peace* that the Reformed had never ceased offering peace to the Lutherans, mentioning Franciscus Junius, the positive response of the Reformed of the Pfalz to the *Bergische Buch*, David Pareus, and John Dury.<sup>165</sup> The eighteenth-century Dutch clergy unanimously put the blame for the continuing schism on the Lutherans, but this did not prevent them from seeking concord at the same time.

The terms of this one-sided Calvino-Lutheran debate were characteristic in that all orthodox theologians believed in the necessity

<sup>163</sup> Kernkamp ed., *Johann Beckmann's dagboek*, 421–424. On Saxe's religious and political views, see Roelevink, 'Vows made in storms . . .'.

<sup>164</sup> Kist, 'Aanteekeningen uit de synodale vergaderingen van Zuid-Holland', 307–308.

<sup>165</sup> S. van Til, *Salems vrede*, 15 (II, § 9). The *Bergische Buch* was the end result of Lutheran attempts to devise a uniform confession, and presented to the Elector of Saxony in 1577 as the *Formula Concordiae*.

of establishing doctrinal unanimity by drawing up a confession or other formal document, to be ratified by the political authorities and maintained through subscription. Christiaan Sepp reports Spanheim as quoting Abraham Heidanus: 'the most perfect and amiable union which can be achieved among men and must be pursued in all writings, and which ought to be the end and goal of all our deliberations in seeking peace is (. . .) *that all men feel and speak the same*'.<sup>166</sup> This latter precondition was accepted as a unionist *sine qua non* by all orthodox irenicists. Van den Honert repeatedly claimed not to pursue a physical union, that is a comprehensive church containing all kinds of opinions, but a spiritual union, based on unanimity and confessional allegiance.<sup>167</sup> This demand for unanimity could imply that concord had to be considered impossible. This was the position usually taken in with respect to the Arminians, as in Heidanus' anti-Remonstrant address *De componenda inter dissidentes Christianos aliquali pace et concordia* (1672).<sup>168</sup>

The first step towards unity was the mutual acceptance of fundamental articles. It is possible to distinguish at least three ways in which fundamental articles were used in Protestant thought.<sup>169</sup> One way was to attribute the articles to the ecumenical councils of the early church. This approach had been characteristic of Catholics like Georg Witzel, Georg Cassander and Marc-Antonio de Dominis, but was also supported by Hugo Grotius and the Lutheran Georg Calixt. The latter regarded the first five centuries after Christ as normative to the contemporary church. Although Calixt had corresponded with seventeenth-century Dutch Remonstrants, his emphasis on the *consensus quinquesaecularis* had little influence in the Netherlands—the German 'syncretists' had in any case been mostly interested in union with the Roman Catholics. Most Reformed and Lutheran divines took a second approach. Like Marck, they believed that fundamentals were expressed in the salvific doctrines revealed in Scripture. Such doctrines could be rephrased in confessions for the sake of

<sup>166</sup> Quoted in Sepp, 'Irenische pogingen', 130; my italics.

<sup>167</sup> In his debate with the Remonstrant Drieberge; see section 4.1 below.

<sup>168</sup> Prior to the Synod of Dort some orthodox Calvinists had believed concord with the Remonstrants to be possible. Cf. e.g. the puritan Willem Teellinck, for example, wrote his *Eubulus* ('Prudence', 1616), in which he called for the practice of charity in the maintenance of truth.

<sup>169</sup> Klauber, 'Between Protestant orthodoxy and rationalism', 616–617; Klauber's discussion is based on Ritschl, *Das orthodoxe Luthertum*.

brevity and precision, but they could in all cases be derived directly from clear scriptural statements. As Ritschl commented with respect to Voet: ‘es sind die Hauptsätze in den einzelnen dogmatischen Kapiteln der christlichen Lehrüberlieferung, die in der kirchlichen Gemeinschaft zur Beförderung und Erhaltung der Glaubens- und Lebenspraxis und ihres Bekenntnisses notwendig sind.’<sup>170</sup> The third way was taken by seventeenth-century Socinians and Remonstrants like Episcopius, whose views were influenced by the humanist Jacob Acontius (c. 1500–1567).<sup>171</sup> This group restricted the fundamentals to those few doctrines explicitly denoted by Scripture itself as necessary to salvation. The orthodox approach differed greatly from the Socinian-Remonstrant one. The orthodox approach encouraged a strong sense of confessionalism, since the salvific doctrines revealed in Scripture formed a complex aggregate that could not be reduced to a few simple rules, and could only be given due assent through faith. Hence the Reformed claimed that those who have saving faith will necessarily believe the fundamentals. In practice, most Calvinist divines prided themselves on not limiting the number of doctrines to a minimum, as the Socinians and Remonstrants did, or extending them too widely, as orthodox Lutherans did.<sup>172</sup> The Voetian Johannes à Marck treated fundamental articles in his chapter ‘De Religione’, claiming that they were derived, not from consensus or inspiration, but exclusively from scriptural testimony. There was no need to fix the number of articles, since one article may often include a number of others. The number of necessary articles should not be perceived as either extraordinarily large or extremely small.<sup>173</sup> Acontius and the Remonstrants, by contrast, argued that acceptance of the fundamentals led to saving faith; they tended to see the relation between acquiescence in fundamentals and salvation as a causal one.<sup>174</sup>

The Reformed view of fundamental articles as a compound of explicitly and implicitly articulated doctrines meant that concord necessarily had to be pursued by colloquial methods—lengthy debates on doctrinal issues conducted by authoritative divines from both par-

<sup>170</sup> Ritschl, *Das orthodoxe Luthertum*, 355–357, on Voet’s disputation *De articulis et erroribus fundamentalibus* (1637).

<sup>171</sup> Ritschl, *Das orthodoxe Luthertum*, 268–278, 285–289; Remer, *Humanism and the rhetoric of toleration*.

<sup>172</sup> Heppel, *Reformed dogmatics*, 43–44.

<sup>173</sup> J. à Marck, *Christianae theologiae medulla didactico-elenctica* (1742), 37–38.

<sup>174</sup> Ritschl, *Das orthodoxe Luthertum*, 277.

ties and formally supported by the political authorities. Pareus had believed that unity ought to be pursued by means of colloquia and a formal synod. Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609) had sought a similar solution in his address *De componendo dissidio religionis inter Christianos*, which he held at Leiden in 1605, calling for a general synod in which laymen were also to participate.<sup>175</sup> Despite the tradition of unsuccessful colloquies spanning more than a century, the Dutch Reformed continued to look upon government-sponsored discussions with the Lutherans as the best means to broaden and strengthen the religious establishment. The colloquial rapprochement pursued by the German Reformed vis-à-vis the Lutherans became a respectable tradition, at least from the Calvinist point of view.<sup>176</sup> At Kassel in 1661, to mention but one instance, members of Calixt's irenicist Helmstedt school held an inconclusive *Religionsgespräch* with some Reformed professors from Marburg, who agreed that absolute concord on dogmatic issues was not needed; all that was required was the mutual forbearance of Christian brothers who agreed on fundamentals. Characteristically, Lutheran diehards rejected these attempts at reconciliation, whereas orthodox Reformed theologians like Maresius<sup>177</sup> and Hoornbeek<sup>178</sup> welcomed them. Since Calixt's theology had been branded 'syncretist' by the Wittenberg orthodoxy, such unification schemes seemed doomed to failure. It took powerful princes to overrule the clergy and put through reforms, and such princes were produced, above all (and out of dire necessity, since the Hohenzollerns were faced with a Habsburg threat), in Prussia. At the instigation of the Great Elector, Frederick William of Brandenburg, a colloquium was held at Berlin in 1662–1663. It too was unsuccessful, largely due to the Reformed Elector's attempts to force

<sup>175</sup> Sirks, *Arminius' pleidooi voor de vrede der kerk*.

<sup>176</sup> See the still useful outline in Ritschl, *Das orthodoxe Luthertum*, 262–265, 457–464. Unionist attempts were neatly summed up in the fourth chapter of the widely-read *Historische und theologische Einleitung in die vornehmsten Religionsstreitigkeiten* (1728–1736), by Budde and Walch.

<sup>177</sup> Maresius had written a *Theologus pacificus, sive dissertatio theologica de syncretismo et reconciliacione partium in religione dissidentium* (1651), in which he argued in favour of Calvino-Lutheran concord. Maresius, who corresponded with Calixt, also wrote a commentary on the Kassel colloquy (*Brevis relatio colloquii*, 1663). Nauta, *Samuel Maresius*, 312–321. Spanheim Jr. also accepted the results of the Kassel debate.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Hoornbeek's *Dissertatio de consociatione evangelica Reformatorem et Augustanae Confessionis, sive de colloquio Cassellano* (1663), which was refuted by Abraham Calov in 1667; see Hofmeyr, *Johannes Hoornbeek*, 153–161, 190.

the Lutherans to comply. Friedrich Wilhelm's successor, the later Frederick I of Prussia, organized an ineffectual discussion between his (Reformed) court preacher Daniel Ernst Jablonski on the one hand, and Leibniz and Molanus, representing Lutheran Hanover, on the other. At the so-called *Collegium charitativum* in Berlin 1703, Jablonski, together with the Frankfurter professor Samuel Strimesius, held unsuccessful talks with several Brandenburg Lutherans.<sup>179</sup>

These discussions did not result in union, but they did result in a spate of irenicist tracts, and ultimately in plans for a union between the Lutherans and the Reformed put forward by the *Corpus Evangelicorum* at Regensburg in 1722. If little was done with these plans, the publications stimulated by the involvement of powerful governments in unionist deliberations fuelled the European toleration debate in general and the Dutch one in particular. This also applies, albeit to a lesser extent, to the Huguenots who surfaced in the Republic and regularly discussed toleration in books almost invariably published in Holland itself. Initially, the Huguenots, who tended to present solutions reflecting the unpropitious situation in Catholic France, do not seem to have inspired many Dutchmen. The French Calvinist Pierre Jurieu may have been irreproachably orthodox, but his exotic brand of politico-religious argumentation—he was notoriously anti-absolutist, Erastian, and chiliastic, and he strongly favoured religious unity over any form of civil toleration—did not fall onto fertile ground in the Netherlands.<sup>180</sup> Jurieu's fellow Huguenots often distinguished between the civil and the religious spheres, and most of them never relinquished the ideal of concord, but their French-oriented solutions failed to enthuse the Dutch. Noël Aubert de Versé's *Le protestant pacifique* (1684) pointed out that Calvinists, quakers and Socinians could easily be tolerated within the Roman Catholic church, a point of view that would not have found much support even among lenient Remonstrants.

The later Huguenots did much to disseminate the Swiss, German and English unionism of the 1710s and 1720s in the francophone press.<sup>181</sup> The Huguenots who dominated that press—men like Jean le Clerc—were not usually conspicuous for their orthodoxy, and their

<sup>179</sup> See also Sykes, *William Wake*, II, 1–88.

<sup>180</sup> Pierre Jurieu, *De pace inter protestantes ineunda* (1688).

<sup>181</sup> Bots and Evers, 'Jean Leclerc et la réunion des églises'; Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, 228–229. For the earlier Huguenots, cf. Simonutti, 'Between political loyalty and religious liberty'.

journals generally covered writings that had a broadly latitudinarian appeal. Among the many books reviewed in French-language periodicals included the *Via ad pacem inter protestantes* (1700), by Friedrich Ulrich Calixt (1622–1701), Georg's son; *De unione evangelicorum ecclesiastica* (1711), by Samuel Strimesius (1648–1730) from Frankfurt an der Oder;<sup>182</sup> the *Considérations générales sur la réunion des Protestans que l'on nomme Luthériens & Réformez* (1709), by Samuel Werenfels; *Nubes testium* (1719), by Jean-Alphonse Turretini; *Dissertatio de moderatione theologia* (1722), by Daniel Maichelius (1693–1752), professor of theology at Tübingen;<sup>183</sup> and the *Trois discours sur les differens sentimens entre les Chrétiens, sur la réunion de l'église chrétienne & sur la tolérance* (1737), by Jean Jacques Salchli. Predictably, none of these latitudinarians found much support among the established Calvinist clergy, although they were read and sometimes translated by Dutch Arminians.<sup>184</sup> The same applies to the *Alloquium irenicum ad protestantes* (1720), by the Lutheran divine Christoff Matthäus Pfaff. Although his writings found wide appeal, Pfaff was hardly a creative irenicist. The acclaim he received from Zürich to London was mainly due to his being a prominent theologian, the chancellor of Tübingen university, and a leading Lutheran light who derived a substantial part of his argument (particularly concerning fundamental doctrines) from his Reformed colleague, Turretini Jr.<sup>185</sup> Understandably, Dutch dissenters were overjoyed at discovering such a prominent ally. The Mennonite Marten Schagen immediately translated Pfaff's *Dissertatio historico-theologica de Formula Consensus Helvetica* (1722), to which he added annotations clarifying the nature of Salmurian theology.<sup>186</sup> A certain 'Christiaan Fratellus', reputedly Johann Christian Klemm (1688–1754), the later theology professor at Tübingen, wrote a pamphlet called *Litterae amici ad amicum, de statu negotii irenici apud Tubingenses* (1723), which was similarly translated into Dutch.<sup>187</sup> The pamphlet demonstrates how the

<sup>182</sup> Published at Leiden by the Huguenot publisher J. du Vivie.

<sup>183</sup> A second enlarged edition appeared in Leiden in 1722. It seems a Dutch translation was also published: *Verhandeling van de theologische bescheidenheit* (1722).

<sup>184</sup> See also Van Eijnatten, 'The debate on religious unity', 331–333.

<sup>185</sup> Schäufole, *Christoph Matthäus Pfaff*. The editors of the Bremen-based *Museum historico-philologico-theologicum*, II, Amsterdam 1729, a well-known periodical in the Republic, dedicated an installment to Pfaff, whom they praised as *pacifer* and whose contributions to *mutua concordia* they valued highly.

<sup>186</sup> D.tr. C.M. Pfaff, *Historische en godgeleerde verhandeling over de Zwitserse Formula Consensus* (1723); on Schagen, see section 4.2 below.

<sup>187</sup> D.tr. [J.C. Klemm], *Onpartydige minnelijke missive aan een goed vriend, wegens de*

latitudinarian offensive spilling over from the German lands was bound up with a changing place of religion in the public sphere. Fratellus did not expect the unionist cause to achieve much headway if it was based on the *disputationes* and *colloquia* of learned theologians—which, of course, had long been instrumental in preserving orthodox confessionalism. Instead, Fratellus suggested that the Protestant sovereigns appoint pious and peaceful divines to draft a set of unionist articles, which should then be imposed on the unified church. If orthodox divines would not desist with their belligerent vindications of obscure mysteries, the authorities would have to do it for them. It was not an argument the Dutch Calvinist clergy of the Republic appreciated. Le Clerc pointed out the consequences of such views in a letter to Turretini, dated 1725.

Les Politiques, comme on les appelle ici, c'est à dire, ceux qui sont dans le gouvernement soient moderez; personne ne parle de Réunion, de peur de s'attirer le zèle sur les bras et de se nuire à eux mêmes, ou à leur famille, parce que quand il y a quelque charge vacante et qu'il y a plusieurs prétendens, il s'en trouve toujours d'assez méchants pour accuser les gens sages, de n'être pas bons Réformez et les faire exclurre (. . .).<sup>188</sup>

Le Clerc had remarked that the universalist view of predestination had been prevalent among Lutherans ever since the doctrines of the Melanchthonian school had replaced Luther's supralapsarianism.<sup>189</sup> Given this theological fact, the Dutch Calvinist clergy could propose two different courses along which to pursue unionism. They could oblige both Lutherans and Arminians by watering down Dort's bitter wine, as in the *Dissertatio theologica de consensu protestantium in doctrina de praedestinatione* (1720). The thesis was defended under the authority of the Swiss divine Johann Heinrich Ringier (1668–1745), who, incidentally, had studied at Franeker. This solution failed to convince orthodox Reformed unionists, who instead were more inclined to agree with Bénédict Pictet's claim in *Virorum immortalis & beatae memoriae, Lutheri & Calvini consensus in quaestionibus de praedestinatione* (1700), to the effect that there was little difference between Luther, Calvin, and Dort.

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*vereenighing der twee protestantsche religien* (1725). Klemm had sparked a controversy with his *Die nöthige Glaubenseinigkeit der protestantischen Kirchen*, Tübingen 1719.

<sup>188</sup> Quoted in Bots and Evers, 'Jean Leclerc et la réunion des églises', 59.

<sup>189</sup> Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, 249 note.

Bound by their own ideals and traditions to support the unionist programmes initiated elsewhere by the collaboration of established clergies and government authorities, Dutch Calvinist divines could not support the latitudinarian direction which Calvino-Lutheran unionism during the 1710s and 1720s appeared to have taken. There was only one thing they could do. They had to continue along the lines set out by their seventeenth-century predecessors, preserving their confessional heritage while keeping the door open for Lutherans of the less inflexible kind. Dutch Calvino-Lutheran 'ecumenism' will be the subject of the next section.

### 3.6 LUTHER AS A CALVINIST

What the Dutch Reformed clergy required their Lutheran fellow Christians to acknowledge was that Luther himself, had he secured his theses to a Genevan church door about half a century after 1517, would have called himself a Calvinist. The argument was anything but novel, and as far as the doctrine of predestination was concerned it was a very strong one. Luther's *De servo arbitrio* (1525) seemed to put even the theology of Dort in the shade. Reformed divines tirelessly repeated their argument in the hope that Luther's followers would one day see the light. In this section we shall review the main eighteenth-century contributions to Calvino-Lutheran dialogue, among others by Johannes M. Mommers, Joan van den Honert, Anthonie van Hardeveldt, Christoph A. Heumann, and Petrus Hofstede, as well as the responses by Lutheran clergymen such as Hector Masius and Johann Lorenz Mosheim.

The idea that Luther had really been a Calvinist was the main contention of one of the more significant Dutch pleas for Calvino-Lutheran reconciliation, published in 1729 in more than 500 pages in quarto, under the inauspicious title *Luther Reformed*.<sup>190</sup> The author was Johannes Mauritius Mommers, the Voetian whom we have already encountered as a protagonist for reconciliation with those Cocceians who followed the *real* Cocceius. In this book, he pleaded for spiritual unity with those Lutherans who followed the *real* Luther. Mommers was saddened by the way Lutherans tended to slander,

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<sup>190</sup> J.M. Mommers, *Luther gereformeert*, Leiden 1729.



accuse and condemn the Reformed, and refused to accept the proffered Calvinist hand of brotherhood. Among the early Reformers, he insisted, there had been a basic agreement on all issues that would be the subject of controversy in later times, and challenged his Lutheran contemporaries to explain why they could not now be united with the Reformed.<sup>191</sup> He intended to show that Luther and his contemporaries had, in fact, upheld the important Reformed doctrines, ranging from predestination, total depravity and free will to the personhood and satisfaction of Christ, the perseverance of the saints, and the Last Supper. He further described the rise and progress of dissension among the Protestants, and attributed the continuation of disunity unreservedly to the Lutherans.

The concept underlying the 49 chapters of Mommer's book is the colloquial tradition. The reader is invited to approach the book as if it were a solemn meeting of the greatest and most famous theologians, to whose learned discussions on grace and salvation he has the honour to be privy. The reader, suggested Mommers, will find out for himself that the participants at this specific colloquy agree unanimously on the essential doctrinal points. In other words, all the Lutheran participants at Mommers' imaginary debate—men like Philipp Melancthon, Johannes Brenz (1499–1570), Johannes Bugenhagen (1485–1558), Caspar Huberinus (1500–1553), Simon Pauli (1534–1591), Nikolaus Hemming (1513–1600), and many others—were in essential agreement with the Reformed. Mommers first mentions 103 issues on which the two parties are known to have agreed. These issues mainly concern rejections of the errors and heresies of Papists, Socinians, Anabaptists, and enthusiasts. Subsequently he discusses the various contested doctrines one by one, first making clear that they have a basis in Scripture and then showing that important Reformed and Lutherans theologians have, in fact, supported them.<sup>192</sup> In later chapters, Mommers provides an historical account of the way dissension arose. His general point is that the Lutherans, who gradually corrupted the theology of the founder of their sect, now make unreasonable demands as a precondition for unity. The Reformed are required to give up their tenets, but it is quite unclear as to which

<sup>191</sup> Mommers, *Luther gereformeert*, 'Voorbericht'.

<sup>192</sup> His Reformed authorities include Calvin, Polyander, Rivet, Walaeus, Thysius, Wollebius, Maresius and, last but not least, the Leiden *Synopsis purioris theologiae* (1625).

particular Lutheran school the Reformed are supposed to address themselves, since there does not seem to be one unified Lutheran doctrine. Surely, it is arguable that the Lutherans themselves ought to reject the corruptions that entered into their theology, and return to the original principles of the Reformation! The Reformed, on the other hand, have to be careful not to give in to the unreasonable demands of Lutherans. Ecclesiastical brotherhood is, after all, based as much on truth as it is founded on peace (2 Cor. 13:11).<sup>193</sup>

In the latter part of his book, Mommers tried to establish a firm basis for the Protestant unity he envisaged. First, he argued that both parties can agree on a common foundation, consisting of the doctrines of human corruption, divine omnipotence, and the sacraments as visible signs and seals of God's grace.<sup>194</sup> Calvinist views on predestination, the nature of Christ and the Eucharist have no effect on this common foundation. Why will the Lutherans not appreciate this? To reach an understanding of the truth requires humility, prayer, research, lack of bias, the subjection of reason to Scripture, diligence, and the recognition that human authority is fallible. Many Lutherans, however, have a very high regard of themselves; they blindly accept the teachings of authoritative divines, and are prejudiced against Calvin. Mommers argued that truth can be found in that theology which most closely approaches Scripture, a divinity that will be both the most reasonable and the most simple. The implication is, of course, that Calvinist theology answers best to this description. In short, Mommers believed to have demonstrated two things. First, the Lutherans have no reason not to regard the Calvinists as brethren, and, secondly, there is no proof that the Calvinists do not possess the truth. Thus Mommers, paraphrasing Ignatius of Antioch in his letter to the Philadelphians, declared that the Reformed and the Lutherans have one Father, one Lord Jesus Christ, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism, and one communion. He then came to practical issues. What had to be done? The parties must refrain from slandering and condemning each other. Lutherans and Calvinists who share a common citizenship must attend each other's sermons and read each other's writings. The party names 'Lutheran' and 'Calvinist' should no longer be used. Lutherans who do not have their own

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<sup>193</sup> Mommers, *Luther gereformeert*, 280–294.

<sup>194</sup> Mommers, *Luther gereformeert*, 369–379.

preachers must join Reformed congregations and communicate with them (the Huguenot Synod of Charenton of 1631 made this possible). In places where there are many Lutherans and many Calvinists, believers belonging to either faith must be allowed to worship in public. In Holland this was already the case, and Mommers hoped that Bremen would soon follow suit.

Mommers' final chapter is concerned with the duties of the government in encouraging religious unity. He required them to appoint to academies and schools men who are learned, pious, peaceful, and willing to study the writings of Luther, Melancthon and Brenz. Likewise, the authorities must ensure that only peaceful and pious ministers are selected to serve the church, men who can be expected to pursue ecclesiastical peace and unity. Dedicating his book to the Prince of Orange, Mommers enjoined princes and kings to keep peace and unity amongst those who profess the true religion.<sup>195</sup> Mommers included a letter of recommendation by the Leiden Cocceian, Taco Hajo van den Honert. The latter welcomed the book and praised the historical approach taken by Mommers in studying the views held by the early Reformers, and in identifying the party that first caused the breach in early Protestantism. If nobody took the trouble to investigate Luther's views beforehand, Mosheim's proposal that the Calvinist party must abjure the Synod of Dort before there can be any reconciliation must be qualified as premature and absurd. A comparison with the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession, observed Van den Honert Sr., will make clear that the Synod of Dort was not in any way innovative.<sup>196</sup> The Lutherans, of course, were not amused. Mommers' book received an answer from Germany—from Hamburg, to be precise, where a Lutheran minister of similar benevolent disposition as his aged Dutch counterpart wrote a *Lutherus lutheranus* (1737). The author, Johann Ludwig Schlosser (1702–1754), had this point-by-point defence of Lutheran Eucharistic views published at Utrecht.<sup>197</sup>

Mommers was not unprejudiced in his appreciation of German Lutheranism, to put it mildly. However, for the established clergy

<sup>195</sup> Mommers, *Luther gereformeert*, 'Dedicatie'.

<sup>196</sup> T.H. van den Honert, ['Brief'], in: Mommers, *Luther gereformeert*.

<sup>197</sup> J.L. Schlosser, *Lutherus lutheranus, Luthero reformato I.M. Mommers oppositus* (1737). Two years later a broader reply was published (Hamburg 1739), including a preface discussing the views of Van den Honert and Gerdes.

the mere pursuit of interconfessional dialogue was almost as important as the results it could achieve. Calvinist irenicism was part and parcel of the attempt to secure the religious quality of the confessional public sphere.<sup>198</sup> If the Lutherans were unwilling to cooperate at this junction, they might be more willing at the next; and there was no harm in trying to seek their approval in the meantime. ‘Speaking the truth in love’ (Ef. 4:15), with an emphasis on truth, was the golden rule of all orthodox irenicists. Moreover, orthodox Lutherans, insofar as they were interested in unionism at all, followed exactly the same policy of irenic self-assertion.<sup>199</sup> This is illustrated by the repeated editions of a book by Hector Gottfried Masius (1653–1709), a leading theology professor and court preacher at Copenhagen, whose career affirmed all the Calvinist prejudices regarding his church and his estate. This particular Lutheran ironside had once claimed that only the Lutheran creed was compatible with monarchic rule, and that Calvinism encouraged rebellion. His assertions led to a hot debate with the young Christian Thomasius.<sup>200</sup> Masius also wrote a *Kurtzer Bericht von dem Unterschied der wahren evangelisch-lutherischen, und der reformirten Lehre* (1691), a book enormously popular in Germany throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Dutch translation, which appeared in 1730, was reissued several times.<sup>201</sup> Masius was convinced that synods and colloquies would conduce to strengthening the anti-Roman front supported by every self-respecting Protestant, especially since so many Calvinists were now finally beginning to recognize the virtues of universal grace.

<sup>198</sup> On irenicism as an ‘adjunct of diplomacy’, see Hotson, ‘Irenicism and dogmatics’.

<sup>199</sup> There were some exceptions, of course, including a small minority of Lutheran divines who continued the Helmstedt tradition instigated by Georg Calixt. Cf. Johannes H. Manné (1679–1732), who favoured union with the Reformed in his *Nauwkeurige zo theologise als historise aanmerkingen over het werk der Reformatie* [*Accurate theological and historical comments on the Reformation*] (1719), espec. 274–276; Manné argued that Lutheranism was the purest reformational faith, closely followed by those Calvinists who shared the Lutheran position on universal grace. The latter included above all the Anglicans, but Manné was convinced that many German and Dutch Reformed ministers no longer strictly adhered to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Cf. also the pious Lutheran minister Lodewijk Dögen (1658–1724), who wrote an irenical work under the pseudonym ‘Philerenus’ in which he apparently distanced himself from the doctrine of consubstantiation; I have not been able to consult the work, published at Dordrecht, 1722.

<sup>200</sup> Grunert, ‘Zur aufgeklärten Kritik’.

<sup>201</sup> H.G. Masius, *Kort bericht van het onderscheyd der waare Evangelisch-Luthersche, en der Gereformeerde Leere* (3rd ed. 1733; 1st ed. 1730).

He derived his main argument from two propositions. First, the Reformed acknowledge that the Lutherans do not err in the foundation of faith. Secondly, the Lutherans do not concede that salvation can be had in the Reformed Church. Ergo, the safest bet would be for all the Reformed to leave Dort behind and enter into the Lutheran church, for then they could have their union and yet not be excluded from salvation.<sup>202</sup>

The contention that Calvinists would have to leave Dort behind before any colloquy could bear fruit had been eloquently defended for the umpteenth time by no one less than Johann Lorenz Mosheim (1694–1755), embarking on his impressive career as a theology professor at Helmstedt. His *De auctoritate Concilii Dordraceni paci sacrae noxia* (1724) was promptly translated into Dutch by Cornelis Westerbaen (1690–1774), a Remonstrant minister.<sup>203</sup> Mosheim was duly rebutted by a German Calvinist, Stephan Veit (1687–1736), a professor at Kassel, whose book appeared in Dutch in 1728, with a dedication to Marie-Louise of Orange (who came from Hesse-Kassel) and a foreword by Joan van den Honert.<sup>204</sup> The book was a sharp retort to Mosheim, based on the argument that ‘schismatic Lutherans’ (as Veit repeatedly expressed himself) would do well to re-examine the writings of the sixteenth-century Reformers—including those of the most radical supralapsarian of them all, Martin Luther. Van den Honert’s own *De gratia Dei, non universali sed particulari* (1725) had been meant to underline the Reformed position at a time when numerous books on irenicism and universal grace, of Swiss and German provenance, were appearing on the Dutch market.<sup>205</sup> Van den Honert, who considered union with the Lutherans vastly desirable, wrote his

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<sup>202</sup> Masius, *Kort bericht*, 198–220. The book was so influential that Van den Honert decided to refute it by showing that the Lutherans did not deviate all that much from the Calvinists; see his *Het kortbegrip der christelike religie* [*Concise account of the Christian religion*], Leiden 1741, preface.

<sup>203</sup> J.L. Mosheim, *De auctoritate Concilii Dordraceni paci sacrae noxia*, Helmstedt 1727 (3rd ed.); D.tr. *Onderzoek van het gezag der Dordrechtsche Synode*, Amsterdam 1726. Westerbaen appended two essays in which he rebutted Calvinist and Lutheran accusations concerning the supposed Socinianism of the Arminians, and in addition denied the lawfulness of Dort.

<sup>204</sup> S. Veit [Vitus], *Apologia, in qua Synodus Dordracena (. . .) vindicatur* (1726). D.tr.: *Apologie, in dewelke het Synode van Dordrecht ende het Hervormd Geloove worden verdedigt* (1728, 1734).

<sup>205</sup> Van den Honert himself had been preceded by Dignus Ketelaar (1674–1750), a high-ranking Zeeland magistrate who defended the orthodox Swiss *Formula Consensus* in his anonymous *Oude en rechtzinnige waarheid* [*Old and orthodox truth*] (1724).

book mainly to counter the allegation that the Arminian and Lutheran positions on universal grace coincided. At the same time he spoke highly of Pfaff, who, he believed, entertained certain doubts concerning Lutheran doctrine.<sup>206</sup> He, in turn, was subsequently censured by Johann Friedrich Hochstetter (1640–1720), a clergyman from Württemberg who delighted in Christian Wolff's philosophy.<sup>207</sup> Several years later the learned Jan Mulder (1704–1776) joined the fray. This Dutch Lutheran minister also had Wolffian sympathies; he had studied at Hamburg and Helmstedt, and was a friend of Mosheim. Defending the Wolffian Hochstetter against the Cartesian Van den Honert, Mulder argued that the doctrine of predestination concurred neither with reason nor with inborn ideas concerning God.<sup>208</sup> Van den Honert himself was supported by the pietist Isaac le Long, who translated a snappy German treatise on predestination by Johann Jacob Waldschmidt (1655–1741)—who himself had recently achieved renown for refuting the Lutheran pietist Joachim Lange (1670–1744).<sup>209</sup> As professor at Halle, Lange had been directed by (of all people) the Reformed King of Prussia, Frederick William I, to confute the doctrine of predestination, which he obediently did by writing *Die evangelische Lehre von der allgemeinen Gnade* (1735). A subsequent Dutch Lutheran defence of both Hochstetter and Lange demonstrated the extent to which the Calvinist attempt at dialogue had deteriorated into an unprepossessing rehearsal of the *odium theologicum*. Indeed, Van den Honert was accused of having initiated, in his *De gratia Dei*, not a dialogue, but a polemic defence of Calvinism;<sup>210</sup> of course, the Leiden patriarch had intended to do both the one and the other.

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<sup>206</sup> Van den Honert, *De gratia Dei*, preface. He also mentioned some orthodox Reformed colleagues in Germany, such as the Herborn theologian Johann Heinrich Schramm (1676–1753), a pietist Cocceian who had studied in the United Provinces.

<sup>207</sup> J.F. Hochstetter, *Schediasma philosophico-theologicum quo dogma praedestinationis absolutae ad stateram rectae rectionis expenditur* (1727); Hochstetter also refuted Veit, and Van den Honert answered Hochstetter in his preface to Veit's apology.

<sup>208</sup> J. Mulder, *Brief aan den heer Joh. van den Honert [Letter to (. . .)]* (1736). Van den Honert replied to Mulder in a 300-page *Aanmerkingen [Comments]* (1736).

<sup>209</sup> J.J. Waldschmidt, *Die heilsame Gnade Gottes* (1735); *D.tr. De heylsaame genaade Godts* (1738). Waldschmidt was a preacher from Hessen. Van den Honert wrote a foreword to Waldschmidt's book, in which he pointed out that Lange abhorred the Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy to which Hochstetter and Mulder adhered.

<sup>210</sup> Jonas Tauson, *Eenwoudige doch duydelyke herinneringen [Simple but clear reminders]* (1739). It is not certain who Tauson was, other than that he held Lutheran views; his book is a well-argued refutation of both Van den Honert and a certain Hendrik van Beerendrecht, who had recently attacked Moravian ecumenism and universal grace.

Van den Honert was also contradicted in an annotated translation of some German expositions of the doctrine of grace, published by the Lutheran minister Theodorus de Hartogh (1704–1741).<sup>211</sup> Van den Honert's well-meaning attempt at Calvino-Lutheran interchange had degenerated into a dialogue of the deaf. The squabble continued into the 1740s,<sup>212</sup> when the various participants finally ran out of energy, ink, and arguments.

This, however, did not put an end to the unbounded optimism of orthodox Reformed irenicists. Another relatively well-known attempt at reconciliation was begun by Anthonie van Hardeveldt († 1777) in 1747. The lengthy subtitle of his *Ecclesiastical plea* reflects the Reformed confessional public sphere in almost every phrase. It claimed to explain moderately and impartially why the Reformed could seek union with the Lutherans but emphatically not with the Catholics. It discussed the doctrinal differences between Lutheranism and Calvinism as well as the means to achieve 'closer union'. Dedicated to the political commissioners of the two provincial synods in Holland, it showed how a 'solemn correspondence' could be initiated among the Protestant churches in the Netherlands.<sup>213</sup> The book had been provoked by a Roman Catholic apologist, who observed that the Calvinists strangely enough sought union with the Lutherans, despite the fact that Lutheran and Catholic views on the Eucharist were actually quite close.<sup>214</sup> Van Hardeveldt, who had evidently read up on the seventeenth-century attempts at Catholic-Protestant union in Germany, explained that Protestants differed so greatly from the Roman Church on so many points that any rapprochement was out of the question. The Lutherans were quite a different story, however. Making adroit use of Bénédict Pictet's orthodox *De consensu ac dissensu inter reformatos, & Augustanae Confessio fratres* (1697), Van Hardeveldt pointed out that the various confessions provided a sufficient doc-

<sup>211</sup> Samuel Walther, *Versuch einer richtigen Erklarung des IX. Capitels an die Römer* (1725); D.tr. *Verhandelingen van de verkiezinge der genaede*, Middelburg 1738; the book also contains a translation of a work by Johann Fabricius (1644–1729).

<sup>212</sup> Cf. Johann Muller (1598–1672), *Absolutum decretum. Das ist: blosser Rathschlus Gottes (. . .) Neben einer Vorrede vom Kirchenfriede der Lutheraner und Calvinisten* (1652); D.tr. *Absolutum decretum*, Amsterdam 1741.

<sup>213</sup> A. van Hardeveldt, *Kerkelyk pleydooy [Ecclesiastical plea]* (1747); the book was formally approved by the Leiden theological faculty (that is, by Joan van den Honert).

<sup>214</sup> Filips Verhulst [as L. Zeelander], *De vaste gronden van het Catholyk geloof [The firm foundations of the Catholic faith]* (1740), 414–415.

trinal basis for union. Lutherans and Calvinists, he suggested, should establish an 'alliance' or 'association', a mutual agreement made in the spirit of charity and brotherhood to support each other and jointly attend the Lord's Supper. The various confessions should not be immediately abolished, since this would only give cause to objections; differences must be examined diligently, so that brothers may understand each other better and eventually be reconciled. In any case, as Calvin, Dury, and Van den Honert Jr. had already pointed out, it is evident that the sacramental views of either party are quite compatible. And if it is true that the Lutheran position on grace is closer to the teachings of the early Arminians, this should not prevent members of the two faiths from living side by side in brotherhood—all the more so since some Lutherans (notably Pfaff) had reservations concerning the doctrine of universal grace. Finally, Van Hardeveldt made some practical recommendations, showing how the apparatus sustaining the confessional public sphere was also used to promote fraternal relations. Among other things, he suggested that representatives of the provincial synods discuss with the Lutheran consistory at Amsterdam on public issues relevant to both churches, such as the spread of pietism and freethinking, the oppression of Protestants abroad, and missions.

Despite the terrible reputation of some Lutheran conservatives (above all the notorious Hamburg polemicist Erdmann Neumeister),<sup>215</sup> orthodox Calvinists continued to reinforce the confessional public sphere by writing open invitations to their Lutheran brothers. The orthodox Willem van Gendt sent in an irenic tract all the way from Stellenbosch, South Africa.<sup>216</sup> Another warm supporter of Calvinist-Lutheran irenicism was Johann Daniel van Hoven (1705–1793), an enormously erudite German from Hesse-Kassel who studied theology at Marburg and Utrecht, held the chair of rhetoric and history at Lingen for a while and in 1757 finally settled down as a preacher at Kampen in the Republic. He eagerly encouraged the ecumenical

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<sup>215</sup> Neumeister's anti-irenicist *Kurtzer Beweis dass das itzige Vereinigungs-Wesen mit den sogenannten Reformirten oder Calvinisten allen zehen Gebothten (. . .) zuwieder lauffe* (1721), an attack on the discussions at Regensburg, was translated as *Kort bewys* (1722). The States of Holland and West Friesland forbade the sale of the book on account of the 'hateful and annoying' way in which it treated Calvinist doctrine; see Van Eijnatten, 'The debate on religious unity', 333–334.

<sup>216</sup> W. van Gendt (no dates), *Middel der vergelijking tusschen de Euangelische [Means of compromise between Protestants]* (1740).



cause begun by Goethe's uncle, Johann Michael von Loën (1694–1776), a man of independent means and idiosyncratic views who in 1752 surprised his relations by accepting the post of *Regierungspräsident* of the principalities of Lingen and Tecklenburg.<sup>217</sup> Van Hoven, too, longed passionately to reunite the 'High and Low German Protestants'.<sup>218</sup> The continuing enthusiasm evinced by orthodox divines for unionism is quite remarkable. One learned divine with the typical ecumenical disposition, Johannes van Herwerden (1713–1772), argued that the twelve tribes of Israel in Rev. 7 prefigure the Reformed and Lutheran lands in north-western Europe (the United Provinces, England, Ostfriesland, Bremen, Holstein, Denmark and Sweden). Armageddon must, therefore, be the territory to the south and southeast of the Dutch Republic (the Austrian Netherlands and France).<sup>219</sup> Van Herwerden dated the commencement of the millennium to 1866, opposing the views of his equally erudite colleague Johannes Ernst Jungius (1714–1775). This pupil of Joan van den Honert believed that the (specifically Calvino-Lutheran) millennium would begin in 1763, and even claimed to have received a special revelation to this effect in 1748.<sup>220</sup> Pro-Lutheran views, whether apocalyptic or not, were entertained by the larger part of the established clergy.

In 1764, a booklet appeared at Göttingen written by the eminent Lutheran exegete Christoph August Heumann (1681–1764), a theology professor at Göttingen. Well-known in the Republic for his exposition of the New Testament, Heumann had the gall to argue that the Calvinist view of the Eucharist had been the right one all along.<sup>221</sup> Heumann stipulated in his testament that his book was to be published after his death, and so it was. The spiritual coming

<sup>217</sup> Cf. J.M. van Loën, *Die einzige wahre Religion, allgemein in ihren Grund-Sätzen, verwirrt durch die Zänkereyen der Schriftgelehrten, zertheilt in allerhand Secten, vereinigt in Christo* (1750) and *Système de la religion universelle pour la réunion des chrétiens* (1753).

<sup>218</sup> See his comments in *Nederlandsche letter-verlustiging*, II-i (1763), 115. Van Hoven himself wrote *Vereinigung der Vernunft mit dem Glauben durch die Liebe* (1753); and *Entwurf einer pragmatischen und unparteyischen Friedens Geschichte* (1759).

<sup>219</sup> J. van Herwerden, *Armageddon* (1756), 55–57; the book was reissued in 1794, in the aftermath of the French Revolution.

<sup>220</sup> J.E. Jungius, *De verborgenheit der laatste tyden die aanstaande zyn, geopent* (1749), 663. Driessen at Groningen had argued in favour of the possibility of such revelations during the 1740s; Jungius, however, was declared to be of unsound mind and accordingly dismissed. Cf. also Pieter Jansz Al, *De laatste staat der kerke [The last state of the church]* (1753), 226–227: in the millennium, Calvin and Luther will consort with Menno, Gomarus and Arminius.

<sup>221</sup> Sparn, 'Philosophische Historie und dogmatische Heterodoxie'; Mager, 'Die theologische Lehrfreiheit'.

out of so distinguished a scholar could not be left unnoticed in the Netherlands, remarked the Dutch translator.<sup>222</sup> Heumann's laudable decision to make public his reservations about Lutheran Eucharistic doctrine should be an example to his colleagues. If the Lutherans took this example to heart and moderated their one-sided view of predestination, the much-desired Protestant union would soon be in the offing. Moreover, if Heumann was to be believed, most Lutherans of scholarly and ecclesiastical distinction—and the list provided in the treatise is quite impressive—surreptitiously harboured Reformed views of the Eucharist.<sup>223</sup> Is it not telling that so many sixteenth-century Lutherans became Reformed, while virtually no Calvinist turned Lutheran? Heumann went on to state that if the Lutherans dispensed with their Eucharistic teaching, and the Calvinists repudiated the *absolutum decretum*, the schism would soon be healed. He claimed to have heard that many clergymen in Kassel and Bremen now rejected predestination, but that they dared not say so openly. This contention did not meet with the approval of the translator, who had made his own inquiries at Bremen but found nothing that could even remotely bear out Heumann's claim. However, Heumann was probably correct on both counts: many German (and possibly not a few Dutch) Reformed divines no longer supported strict predestinarianism, while many Lutherans found the Eucharistic teachings of their church problematic.<sup>224</sup> When Johann Beckmann visited the Reformed preacher Nicolaus Barkey in Bremen in 1762, his host informed him that he

<sup>222</sup> C.A. Heumann, *Erweiß, daß die Lehre der reformirten Kirche von dem Heil. Abendmahl die rechte und wahre sei* (1764); D.tr. *Belydenis en betoog dat de leere (. . .)* (1764). The publisher was H. Vieroot and the translator 'H.V.' I take it that both are the same person. Vieroot had contacts in Bremen; he translated a work by N. Barkey in 1764, who was then a Reformed preacher at Bremen, and published other books concerned with contemporary German ecclesiastical affairs.

<sup>223</sup> The reviewer in *VZ* 1765-i, 191–193, found this most improbable. Heumann's book was countered by an annotated translation of the *Gutachten* of the Göttingen theological faculty; D.tr. *Het oordeel van de godgeleerden (. . .)* (1764); the translator, a certain 'J.M.', for good measure provided his readers with the Lutheran divine Johann E. Schubert's valued opinion on eucharistic doctrine.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. *Zedemeester der kerkelyken*, 176; the Dutch Lutheran author of this periodical claimed to know from experience that many Lutherans favoured the Reformed conception of the Eucharist, and that many Reformed favoured the Lutheran view of predestination. Also *VZ* 1782-i, 69–74, with the claim that Reformed ministers were bound to banish predestination from their sermons, since universal grace was more popular than ever; it was commonly held that predestination provoked free-thought, so that even leading members of the church now openly preached universal grace.

had just been sent Michaelis' *Dogmatik*. Michaelis had dispatched it 'mit der Frage, wie sie ihm in puncto sacrae coenae gefiele.' Barkey answered that Michaelis had not been clear enough; 'er glaube aber, dasz er vöellig mit ihnen, als den Reformirten, einerley Meinung habe.'<sup>225</sup>

Orthodox Reformed irenicists again voiced optimistic expectations in 1760, on the marriage of Princess Carolina of Orange (1743–1787), the Stadtholder's sister, with Prince Karl of Nassau-Weilburg (1735–1788), a high-ranking military officer in the service of the Republic. Karl was a German Lutheran who, after his definitive return to Weilburg in 1784, introduced religious freedom for both Catholics and Calvinists there. He was permitted to marry into the House of Orange after having assured the States General that his heirs would be educated as Calvinists (critics feared that if the present prince of Orange were inadvertently to expire, the next in line for the stadtholderate might well be a Lutheran—with all due consequences for the patronage of Calvinism). The knowledgeable Orangist Petrus Hofstede gave his blessing to the matrimonial arrangement in a *Theological and historical treatise*, using the pseudonym *Irenicus Reformatus*.<sup>226</sup> He pointed out that there were no fundamental differences between the followers of Calvin and Luther, and contended that *real* Lutherans taught absolute predestination and the particularity and irresistibility of grace.<sup>227</sup> The bonding between two private persons of distinction was an excellent way of initiating unionism, believed Hofstede, who referred in passing to Acontius, Dury, Pareus, the Calixts (father and son), Hoornbeek, Spanheim, Jurieu, Pictet, Klemm, Jablonski, Pfaff, Turretini, Van den Honert, Gerdes,<sup>228</sup> and a host of other writers in the Calvino-Lutheran irenicist tradition. Incidentally, the attempts at interconfessional dialogue in Nassau-Weilburg itself did not proceed without a hitch. An orthodox periodical provided extensive information on the riots that took place on the introduction of a

<sup>225</sup> Kernkamp ed., *Johann Beckmann's dagboek*, 458.

<sup>226</sup> P. Hofstede [as Irenicus Reformatus], *Godgeleerde en historische verhandeling* (1760).

<sup>227</sup> In a later work, written when he was embroiled in a conflict with a Lutheran minister, Hofstede described the typical Lutheran household, which contained all of Luther's writings except for *De servo arbitrio* (1525); see De Bie, *Petrus Hofstede*, 374.

<sup>228</sup> Gerdes claimed to have pursued 'concordia inter Evangelicos' as a professor at Duisburg; Witteveen, *Daniel Gerdes*, 199. In his church history, Gerdes stressed the basic doctrinal unanimity of the early reformers; see Augustijn, 'Das Bild der Reformation'.

new, non-doctrinal schoolbook, prescribed by a joint Calvinist-Lutheran committee. Apparently, the local Lutheran peasantry did not appreciate unionist efforts.<sup>229</sup>

The attempts to introduce English liturgical formularies into Prussia and Hanover in the first decades of the century were still echoed some fifty years later.<sup>230</sup> Generally speaking, however, unionist proposals instigated by the politico-religious establishment were greeted with increasing scepticism in the press. By contrast, practical instances of religious rapprochement were always warmly applauded.<sup>231</sup> American Lutherans were praised as an example to their German counterparts, who still had the reputation of being ill disposed to the Reformed.<sup>232</sup> Books by prominent Lutherans of conventional orthodoxy began to be translated by reputable Reformed divines, to the approval of Mennonite reviewers.<sup>233</sup> Several responses to Hofstede's appeal in the 1760s clearly indicate the growing desire for a public of free religious debate. The anonymous author of two *Letters on the union of Protestants* (c. 1760)<sup>234</sup> argued that a union between Calvinists and Lutherans was theoretically possible, and, indeed, had been prophesied in the Bible. He did not believe that a union was to be expected in the near future. There were more snags than *Irenicus Reformatus* supposed, and not only because the powerful Lutheran divines in Saxony were not exactly celebrated for their liberalism. The author (who prided himself on his pragmatism) offered a list of practical obstructions to union, including the widespread attachment to confessions, the high

<sup>229</sup> *NB* 1779-ii, 1–22, 48–64, 91–112; the account includes a translation of the *Rechtfertigung des landesfürstlichen Verfahrens beim Kirchheimer-Tumult* (1778), by the jurist Christian Jacob Zwierlein (1737–1793).

<sup>230</sup> *Symbolae litterariae Haganae ad incrementum scientiarum omne genus, a variis amicis collatae* [N. Barkey ed.] (1777–1781), I-i, on Anglican-Prussian-Hanoverian unionism.

<sup>231</sup> Cf. the sceptical reactions to *Eenwoudig doch niet min gepast middel om alle de gezindheden, die zich Christenen noemen, is het niet tot eensgezindheid ten minsten tot verdraagzaamheid te bewegen* [Simple but fitting means to unify all Christian denominations, or at least to encourage them to exercise forbearance] (1782), in *VL* 1782-i, 569–570; *NB* 1782-i, 578–580. Cf. also *NB* 1779-ii, 215–223. The press, however, was interested in a German account of the communal celebration of the Lord's Supper by Lutherans and Calvinists in the principality of Hohenstein; *VL* 1785-ii, 188–192.

<sup>232</sup> *VL* 1793-ii, 581–584.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. Johann Andreas Cramer (1723–1788), a rather conservative professor of theology at Kiel, whose commentary on Hebrews was translated by the Reformed Izaak van Nuyssenburgh (1738–1775); *D.tr. Verklaaring van Paulus Brief aan de Hebreewen* (1777–1779); review in *VL* 1778-i, 283–286.

<sup>234</sup> *Eerste brief, nopens de vereeniging der Protestanten; Tweede brief* (. . .); both by 'H.H.' (s.a.); reviews in *VL* 1761-i, 224–228 and 1761-ii, 689–691.

regard for human authority, the impossibility of determining precisely which articles were fundamentally true, and the fact that confessions were so intricately bound up with the socio-political order. The stress on a pan-Protestant front against Rome was outdated, since unbelief had become a far greater threat than Papism. Given continuing confessional discord, a proper ecclesiastical union could only be expected through divine intervention. What was needed now was a completion of the Reformation, a 'Reformation of Love' that entailed full acceptance of religious plurality. Other commentators, too, pointed out that the externals of Christendom mattered far less than the fact that the various churches included true believers belonging to the invisible Church of Christ.<sup>235</sup>

The preceding sections have focused on the confessional public sphere as it functioned in the Netherlands before the 1760s. Whereas the previous chapter was concerned to show that the public church was successful in containing heresies, this chapter has tried to demonstrate that there was certain, though limited, room for variety in Dutch Calvinism. Moderately orthodox church leaders like Van den Honert, Bonnet and Van der Kemp tried to provide the church with a formal argument legalizing the practice of toleration in the United Provinces; they were, however, criticized by both the religious left and the religious right. At the same time, there existed within the public church a religious tradition that is best qualified as latitudinarian, since it pleaded for doctrinal variety. The apologists who belonged to this tradition—among others Vitringa, Venema, Conradi, Schultens, and Van Alphen—believed that a latitudinarian church was a morally satisfactory extension or modification of the confessional public sphere. Like the clerical potentate Van den Honert, they did not, however, deny the need for confessional control. The same can be said for the many Calvinist divines who pursued interconfessional dialogue, above all with the Lutherans. For these 'irenics', ecumenical dialogue directly reflected the need to strengthen the confessional public sphere, in the face of dissent at home and Papism abroad.

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<sup>235</sup> *De voor God en menschen zo zeer aangenaame, broederlijke en algemeene liefde* [*The fraternal and general love which is so pleasant to God and man*] (s.a.) [c. 1760]; the writer (a pietistic 'true and sincere lover of peace') may have been J.H. Ross; see *VL*, 1761-ii, 538–539. Cf. also *Nadenkelyke droom* [*Thoughtful dream on the multiplicity of sentiments in the Christian religions*] (s.a.) [c. 1760]; review in *VL* 1761-i, 228–229: the distinctions between the sects are irrelevant if seen from the perspective of judgement day; people need believe only in the one God, and obtain his grace through Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RAPPROCHEMENT IN DISSENT

#### INTRODUCTION: THE PRAYER DAY AS SYMBOL OF UNITY

In the decades around 1700, toleration in the Netherlands (as elsewhere) had resolutely advanced, even if official policies and legal regulations did not keep pace with day-to-day practice. The Republic made an impression on foreigners. As many Germans had the habit of doing, the later *Abt* Jerusalem made a *Bildungsreise* to the Netherlands in the 1730s. He would always remember the tolerant attitude he found in Holland, ‘in welcher glücklichen Eintracht und Ruhe, bei einer wohlgeordneten und wohlbefestigten allgemeinen Gewissensfreiheit, alle Sekten der Christenheit bei einander wohnen können.’<sup>1</sup> ‘Le juif, l’anabaptiste, le luthérien, le calviniste, le catholique se servent et commercent,’ Diderot ascertained half a century later, ‘sans que la différence des opinions religieuses influe sur les sentiments d’humanité.’<sup>2</sup> Or as Voltaire fancifully intoned, ‘A Rome, on est esclave; à Londres citoyen. / La grandeur d’un Batave est de vivre sans maître.’<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, most travellers also noticed that Remonstrant churches had no towers, Lutheran churches were never freestanding, Mennonite churches seemed to be no more than adapted houses, Catholic churches were invisible, and only Calvinist churches were permitted the grandeur befitting public places of worship. The way foreign travellers interpreted their observations depended on their origins and their itinerary. It was clear to most that toleration was a comparative matter. Religious, social, and political discrimination was no less inherent in the public order of the Dutch Republic than it was in any other early modern state.

The sense of unity between the various denominations, insofar as

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Müller, *Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Jerusalem*, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Diderot, *Voyage en Hollande*, 127.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Van Sypesteyn, *Voltaire, Saint-Germain, Caligostro, Mirabeau*, 60: ‘Stances à Mr. van Haren, député des États-Généraux’, 1743. See also Bots, ‘Tolerantie of gecultiveerde tweedracht’.

it existed among the articulate public, was based largely on a long memory of common experience. One natural point of reference was the religious and political struggle of the Dutch Revolt. Reflecting on the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648), Dutch opinion leaders generally agreed that the United Provinces were and ought to be Protestant in character, that they were and should be organized as a republic, and that the basic 'constitution' of the Dutch Republic (the Union of Utrecht of 1579) still succeeded in safeguarding liberties in a way few other legal arrangements were able to do. Among other things, this common experience was affirmed and celebrated annually during the so-called thanksgiving and prayer days. Days of national prayer were held at the behest of the government, which looked upon its official 'prayer day letter' as a formal assertion of its authority. The prayer day letter was read aloud in church and the congregation sermonized in a thoroughly predictable manner. Sin, repentance, conversion, gratitude—invariably these were the pastoral ingredients of the prayer day ritual. The misdemeanours of the people were publicly confessed and Providence entreated to withdraw its judgements, ranging from famine and war to rinderpest and pileworm. The interesting point is that all denominations took part in these prayer day meetings. Remonstrants, Mennonites, Lutherans and even Roman Catholics and Jews participated in the national ritual.

The dissenters recognized the public church as the dominant religious institution, and the Reformed clergy in turn appreciated them as legitimate constituents of the Republic's spiritual order.<sup>4</sup> The prayer day ritual was, however, instrumental to church-state control of the public sphere. Dissenters participated in the prayer day as a conditioned response to having been officially approved by the authorities. Participation was mandatory. Dissenters could hardly refuse to comply, and had no choice but to play their part in underscoring their loyalty to the regime. By displaying their allegiance, dissenters could make certain that the church-state establishment would have no reason to discontinue its policy of connivance and toleration; and they could attempt to play off the church against the state, thus subverting the 'hierarchical' structure of the public sphere.

This may be illustrated by a petition offered to the Frisian States in 1745, in which a number of Mennonites requested a re-opening

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<sup>4</sup> Van Rooden, 'Dissenters en bededagen.'

of the case against Johannes Stinstra. The latter had been accused of Socinianism and suspended from office. One of the arguments put forward in the petition concerns the evident castigations that the Lord had brought over the Republic, in particular war and pestilence. In such times of distress—the petitioners purposely made use of prayer day rhetoric—it is of paramount importance to grant the people the freedom to worship in public:

For in this way, as Lovers of the well-being of the Fatherland, they will be able to pray together in perfect concord, and in unison with all the other inhabitants of the Land, to God, as the mild provider of all good, calling upon Him so that He may graciously ward off the disasters and Plagues and bestow an enduring blessing upon both Rulers and Subjects; in this way they can best work together to provide and yield all those means which good Subjects may employ, out of a glowing love for the preservation of the Common peace, Freedom, and Well-Being.<sup>5</sup>

This was an obvious reference to the vast sums of money traditionally paid by the Mennonites to the Republic's war effort, but it was also a veiled threat. If Mennonites were not granted religious freedom, they would perhaps not be as magnanimous as they could be. At the same time, the submissive reference to the official prayer day, as well as the emphasis on peace and unity, were meant to placate the authorities and thwart suspicions of disloyalty.

Prayer days offered a welcome opportunity to demonstrate allegiance to the political status quo and as far as the government was concerned this was one of its main functions. A people who obeyed God was also likely to obey the government. On the other hand, prayer days were often also regarded as a coercive means employed by the politico-religious establishment to ensure spiritual unanimity, and thus the continuing submission of dissent to the Reformed 'hierarchy'. Hence the traditional prayer days began to meet with severe criticism around the middle of the eighteenth century, precisely because they were perceived as an instrument of religious coercion. Critical divines began to use them as a means to denounce all notions of hierarchy and supremacy. A Lutheran minister put so much emphasis on the need for civil concord and 'true forbearance' that he felt obliged to issue an indirect warning against the dangers posed

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted by C. Sepp, *Johannes Stinstra*, II, 124.



to the state by the orthodox established clergy.<sup>6</sup> His plea can only be read as an oblique suggestion to do away with the hierarchy of religions in the name of a latitudinarian church. Likewise, in one of the more critical moral weeklies, an alternative 'Model for a good prayer day sermon' called for a day of thanksgiving, since God had provided the inhabitants of the United Provinces with complete freedom of inquiry, in spite of 'domineering clerics'. The implication was that they could serve God worthily and publicly only when the religious hierarchy had been done away with.<sup>7</sup> Such criticism came out into the open towards the end of the century. When the restoration government after 1788 began to use the official prayer day letters to denounce revolutionary Patriots, it provoked sharp criticism of the traditional prayer day sermon as an instrument of religious oppression.<sup>8</sup> When in 1796 a revolutionary Calvinist preacher proposed during a session of the National Convention to hold a national prayer day to obtain God's blessing for the deliberations of the representatives, he caused such a racket that he could not make himself heard.<sup>9</sup>

Common experience bound the citizens of the Republic, but to a certain extent only. Views differed sharply as to the obligations conferred on the Dutch people by their history. How could the Dutch best live up to the expectations of sixteenth-century freedom fighters? What was the true legacy of the *pater patriae*, William of Orange? Had he envisaged a society presided over by a dominant church, or had he supported denominational equality? There was little consensus on such questions; where consensus was lacking there was acquiescence, resignation, or opposition. This chapter examines manifestations of acquiescence, resignation, and opposition among the various dissenting groups outside the public church (Arminians, Mennonites, and Catholics), as well as among certain critics within that church. Those who found it hardest to conform to the politico-religious order

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<sup>6</sup> P.L. Stadius Muller, *Het belang der souwerainen, en des volks, in het heilig vieren van een algemeene dank- vast- en bededag voorgesteld* [*The interests of the sovereign and the people in solemnly celebrating a day of general thanksgiving, fast, and prayer*] (s.a.) [1768], 76–83.

<sup>7</sup> *De Rhapsodist* II (1772), 244–270; another alternative prayer day letter in *De Denker* IV (1767), 49–56.

<sup>8</sup> Exiled Patriots in France responded to these prayer day letters; Roosendaal, 'Geloof en Revolutie', 280 note 28. Cf. also B. van Rees, *Zestal kerklijke redevoeringen gedaan op de bedestonden* [*Six church addresses held on prayer days*] (1782).

<sup>9</sup> De Visser, *Kerk en staat* III, 15; the preacher was IJ. van Hamelsveld.

as it had developed since 1619 were the Remonstrants. The next section (4.1) is devoted to an influential text by a little-known Dutch Arminian, as an illustration of the way the Remonstrants, too, envisaged a latitudinarian version of the confessional public sphere. Attention will then be given to the influence of English and Swiss latitudinarians, whose dissemination in the Netherlands was largely the result of Dutch dissenters (4.2); and to the attempt to integrate such latitudinarian ideals in the Reformed Church itself, and the concomitant radicalization of the toleration debate (4.3). Subsequently the Mennonite contribution to the discussions on freedom and concord will be examined (4.4). A final section is dedicated to the position of Roman Catholics in the Dutch toleration debate (4.5).

#### 4.1 THE ARMINIAN ART OF MODEST POLEMIC

Episcopius and Grotius developed the first full-fledged Arminian theories of toleration in the 1620s.<sup>10</sup> In his *Vrye godedienst* (*Free Religion*, 1627), Episcopius had argued for freedom of religious practice for all denominations, including Roman Catholics. Claiming that all Christians fundamentally agree, he contended that religious diversity stabilizes the state by ensuring that the people are happy and content. At the end of the century, even Bossuet recognized the intellectual leadership of Episcopius in providing a theory of toleration (or indifference, as the Bishop of Meaux said).<sup>11</sup> Grotius similarly emphasized fundamentals of faith in his *De veritate religionis Christianae*, which also appeared in 1627; unlike Episcopius, he did not explicitly defend the freedom to worship in public. What practically all Remonstrants envisaged, in the end, was a comprehensive national church. Grotius was the most outspoken supporter of union and concord, pursuing irenicist ideals in decidedly Erastian vein,<sup>12</sup> but even Episcopius regarded toleration as a temporary measure, necessary only because Calvinists were so obstinate in their exclusiveness. As one Remonstrant put it, after the Synod of Dort had definitively settled religious affairs,

<sup>10</sup> Israel, 'Toleration in seventeenth-century Dutch and English thought', 17–23; Tuck, *Philosophy and government*, 179–201; for the broader context, see also Lecler, *Histoire de la tolérance*, II, Livre VII.

<sup>11</sup> Quoted in Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, 3 note.

<sup>12</sup> Posthumus Meyjes, 'Hugo Grotius as an irenicist'.

a 'head religion' had to be maintained in public temples; but people should also practise toleration, 'educating each other with patience and mutual mildness and waiting to see whether God at a certain moment will grant that those who err will be converted, and confess to the truth and awaken to his will.'<sup>13</sup> The Remonstrant hope that one day the votaries of Dort—above all the magistracy—would be converted to a less predestinarian faith, and enticed to transform the public church into a latitudinarian state church, was later voiced by second-generation Arminians like Gerard Brandt and Philip van Limborch.<sup>14</sup> One man who laboured hard to realize this ideal in the early eighteenth-century Republic was a now all but forgotten Remonstrant, Johannes Dierberge. In this section we shall concentrate on his heated discussion with Van der Honert Jr. during the 1720s; we shall see that he carried over the Arminian tradition of denouncing Nicodemism and pursuing latitudinarianism into the eighteenth century.<sup>15</sup>

In his day, Johannes Dierberge (1686–1746) had enjoyed an excellent reputation as a preacher and scholar. After serving as a minister for some twenty-five years, he was appointed as professor at the Remonstrant Seminary in 1737. Dierberge never achieved the international renown of his erstwhile tutors, Van Limborch and Le Clerc, or his colleague Johann Jakob Wettstein (1693–1754). He lived at a time when the United Provinces were becoming ever more provincial, in the sense that a literary market had developed in which regional vernaculars were rapidly outdoing Latin. The Republic of Letters was, as it were, emerging from the elitist position it had created in semi-private correspondence networks, and its ecumenical approach to scholarship was being integrated into the domestic religious public. In this respect, it is revealing that Dierberge earned his reputation as a scholar with a Dutch translation of *The Old and New Testament connected* (1716–1718), by the English orientalist Humphrey Prideaux (1648–1724), and that these expensive editions were prefaced by the one outstanding Calvinist theologian of the time, Vitringa Sr.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Enno van Gelder, *Getemperde vrijheid*, 244.

<sup>14</sup> Van Eijnatten, 'Lodestars of latitude'.

<sup>15</sup> On the eighteenth-century Remonstrant tradition, see Vuyk, *De verdraagzame gemeente van vrije Christenen* and Vuyk, *Verlichte verzen en kolommen*.

<sup>16</sup> D.tr. H. Prideaux, *Het Oude en Nieuwe Verbond aen een geschakelt* (1723); a folio edition was published in 1729, and reprinted several times.

In 1730, Drieberge was on the lookout for an able successor to the now aged Le Clerc and wrote a letter to his nephew Frans van Limborch (1679–1765), a high-ranking Remonstrant jurist in government service, asking him whether he might have any suggestions. The Remonstrant Brotherhood needed a competent leader more than ever, wrote Drieberge, now that ‘our good cause’ was sadly deteriorating. ‘The only thing that somewhat consoles me is that, while the public confessors of our sentiments are declining in number and lapsing cowardly, our hidden supporters increase daily.’ A proof of this had been presented recently by the proceedings at the South Holland Synod. Notorious for its resolute orthodoxy, the Synod had expressed great anxiety about the spread of Arminianism among theology students at the Leiden academy. In particular, the Synod had called upon the theological faculty to produce a book confuting Van Limborch’s *Theologia Christiana*. If the Leiden theologians heeded this call, Drieberge would respond with a publication, ‘even though the chances of acquiring outward confessors by this means are small, but getting Nicodemists is better than nothing at all.’ He requested Frans van Limborch to obtain some inside information from Van Hees, the political commissioner who had attended the Synod.<sup>17</sup>

Drieberge’s letter illustrates the way in which the small Arminian community had long been obliged to pursue its ideal of a latitudinarian national church. They had tried to obtain a following of openly or secretly converted Counter-Remonstrants ever since their downfall at the Synod of Dort.<sup>18</sup> Drieberge shared Le Clerc’s aversion to persecuting divines and obligatory confessions. The irony is that by the 1730s there were fewer Arminians than ever to attempt to realize Episcopius’ ideals. Weaker spirits, believed Drieberge and

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<sup>17</sup> ms University of Amsterdam, L 46c (Drieberge to F. van Limborch, dd. Rotterdam 24–8–1730). In the 1740s, Van Limborch maintained contacts with the Collegiant historian Jan Wagenaar; see Wessels, *Bron, waarheid en de verandering der tijden*, 60–61.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. also ms University of Amsterdam, L 46g (Drieberge to F. van Limborch, dd. Rotterdam 10–10–1744), on the public defence of Arminian doctrine: ‘If one gains only Nicodemists in this way; one must remember *Est quadam prodire tenus si non datur ultra*.’ Drieberge continued by describing how one of the ‘Nicodemists’, a certain ‘Bak’, had furthered the Arminian cause by recommending Tillotson’s sermons to Johannes van Eerbeek, a Reformed preacher who was later deposed on account of his Arminian views and became a Mennonite. On Nicodemism, see Labrousse, ‘Plaidoyer pour le nicodémisme’.

his soul mates, willingly traded the religious and social difficulties encountered by the Brotherhood for the many benefits of public church membership (though the actual reason for the Arminian decline was probably demographic). In addition, the Arminian ideal of a comprehensive church was now beginning to be pursued by a hoard of critics and Nicodemists within the public church itself. As for Drieberge, he preferred to remain principled, even if it meant persecution. He himself had first-hand experience of how it felt to live in anxiety as a pastor and an intellectual. In 1727, he had had the dubious honour of being debated upon in person by the South Holland Synod, following a complaint lodged by the Classis of Delft.<sup>19</sup> He was accused of undermining the religious establishment by attacking the dignity of official doctrine, rejecting the autonomy of the public church, setting the magistracy against the clergy, and suggesting that the larger part of the Calvinist clergy outside the Netherlands, and most magistrates within, favoured Arminianism over Dort. The Synod considered calling on the authorities to forbid his writings, but decided not to do so for fear of overplaying its hand. Instead, it summoned the church to examine with greater care the beliefs of prospective pastors and other church officials, and showered a superabundance of praise on Drieberge's main opponent, Joan van den Honert, who at that time was a young and ambitious Reformed minister waiting impatiently for an academic vacancy.

The clash between Van den Honert and Drieberge was significant mainly because it was fought out in the open. In 1725, Van den Honert had thought it opportune, in view of the academic career he had in mind, to write a learned apology for Calvinist orthodoxy. This was his book *De gratia Dei, non universali sed particulari*, which we have already encountered several times. Concerned to acquire the approval of the authorities, he dedicated the book to no less than twenty-five members of the reigning aristocracy of Haarlem.<sup>20</sup> The treatise is not only important because of its popularity in orthodox circles as a specific defence of the *Canones* of Dort, or because it was a confutation of Philip van Limborch's *Theologia Christiana*. It was also preceded by a foreword in which Van den Honert refuted the attempts of his contemporaries to dilute or avoid the doctrine of pre-

<sup>19</sup> Kist, 'Aanteekeningen uit de synodale vergaderingen van Zuid-Holland', 276–286.

<sup>20</sup> D.tr. *Verhandelingen van Gods, niet algemeene, maar besondere genade* (1726), by A. Stochius, a medical practitioner.

destination for the sake of ecclesiastical union. Drieberge then wrote his *Comments on the foreword by Mr. Joan van den Honert* (1726)<sup>21</sup> on the advice of a friend. It was not intended as a defence of universal grace (he did not deem it wise to justify this doctrine in the one country where it had been officially condemned), but as a commentary on a subject that was the home territory, so to speak, of the Remonstrants: the mutual toleration of Christians. This topic, Drieberge claimed, was at least as important as the nature of divine grace. For if Christians concurred on the rule that nobody should be censured or excommunicated on account of any particular interpretation of Scripture, the debate on universal grace itself would be superfluous.<sup>22</sup> Hence, one of the questions asked in Drieberge's *Comments* was whether the National Synod of Dort had had the right to excommunicate those who did not acquiesce in a particular exegesis of certain biblical passages. Drieberge had the nerve to suggest that the Remonstrants were no more than a persecuted minority, and implied that they were no better off in this so-called free Republic than victimized Protestants under the Catholic King of France. His book and its sequel were read until at least the 1760s; together they comprised a resounding indictment of the orthodox confessional public sphere and its dual emphasis on polemic defence and colloquial debate.

Van den Honert's treatise on particular grace had taken him by surprise, said Drieberge. Why revive a superannuated controversy at a time when a number of prominent Germans have finally begun to try to unify the Protestant churches? The Germans have suggested two methods for achieving religious peace. The first is to tone down doctrinal differences by demonstrating that certain *fundamentalia* are actually *adiaphora*. The second is simply to remain silent, to refrain from discussing the doctrines at issue. Van den Honert apparently chose to follow a third, more traditional route. His suggestion was that opposite parties should write against each other until one party is proven right. This method, observed Drieberge, will result only in a fruitless discussion with no prospect for an end.<sup>23</sup> There is no point in repeating anew all the arguments for and against predestination. But strangely enough, observed Drieberge, Van den Honert did not

<sup>21</sup> J. Drieberge, *Aenmerkingen over het voorberigt van den heer Joan vanden Honert* (1726).

<sup>22</sup> Drieberge, *Aenmerkingen*, 'Brief aen enen myner Vrienden'.

<sup>23</sup> Drieberge, *Aenmerkingen*, 1-6.

defend the doctrine of particular grace at all. He simply rejected the Lutherans' argumentation. The latter accused the Reformed of unscriptural reasoning and drew all kinds of hateful conclusions. Although these conclusions were the real impediments to a union with the Lutherans, Van den Honert did not attempt to remove them. In fact, Van den Honert was not really concerned to convince the Lutherans at all. The main object of his attack were renegade Reformed theologians who, in their attempts to achieve unity, compromised the theology of Dort, or claimed that doctrinal differences were of little import. Van den Honert did not mention any names, but merely observed that these theologians were foreigners. To Drieberge, however, it was perfectly clear to whom Van den Honert was referring: the Nicodemist Jean-Alphonse Turretini and his treatise on necessary doctrines.<sup>24</sup> But if Van den Honert believed predestination to be a necessary doctrine, why pursue church unity at all? He claimed that a church not unified on the issue of grace would necessarily disintegrate. Drieberge countered this claim by referring to Gilbert Burnet's account of the Anglican confession, where the English latitudinarian stressed that Arminians and Calvinists had the freedom to interpret the articles of faith at their own discretion.<sup>25</sup>

Van den Honert's suggestions for achieving church unity could not be taken seriously. Colloquial discussions, even if they are held in an atmosphere of friendship, politeness and brotherhood, will not bring the churches a whit closer to peace. Who will be the judge of the truth, when both parties are already so convinced of having found it? Van den Honert should consider Pierre Jurieu's claim that disputes can never result in peace.<sup>26</sup> The orthodox colloquial method was intended to achieve a precise formulation of true doctrine. The

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<sup>24</sup> Drieberge was alluding to the 'De articulis fundamentalibus disquisitio' in Turretini's *Nubes testium*. In his *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 23, Drieberge pointed out that Van den Honert was concerned to refute 'a small book, containing the Swiss *Formula Consensus* with several annotations'; see also section 4.2 below.

<sup>25</sup> Drieberge, *Aenmerkingen*, 32–47. Drieberge referred the reader to the translation of Burnet's *An Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles* (1699), particularly his discussion of article 17 on predestination and election.

<sup>26</sup> Drieberge, *Aenmerkingen*, 50–54. Drieberge refers to P. Jurieu, *De pace ineunda*, 263, as quoted in P. Bayle, *Dictionnaire historique et critique* (1720, 3rd ed.), vol. II, 1519 note D; this is the article on J.H. Hottinger, who had done 'quelque chose sur la réunion des Luthériens & des Réformez', which, however, had come to nothing. In the note, Bayle referred to Jurieu's opinion that matters of church unity should be left to politicians rather than theologians, since in colloquies the truth of doctrines is not disputed; the participants do not seek peace, but victory.

Reformed Church already claimed to possess clear and concise doctrines, and it expected its members to subscribe to them because they were in fundamental agreement with the Word of God. It may seem that the Reformed made ample allowance for the exercise of Christian freedom, but appearances deceive. Confessionalism is merely a disguise for slavery. Whence came the right of the National Synod to determine for once and for all a specific rule of faith and conduct to which all church members were to subscribe? If they had not received a special mandate from God, then it must be concluded that Dort grossly infringed upon Christian freedom.<sup>27</sup> Since the colloquial method will come to nothing, mutual forbearance seems the only solution. Drieberge concluded with the following advice for all 'young, hot-headed Divines'. Let every individual have the freedom to hold and profess the tenets which he personally believes, after well-intentioned inquiries, to accord most with the Word of God. Let no one be coerced in his beliefs, for each will have to give account of himself to God (Rom. 14:12). There will then be freedom and peace, and where there is peace, there is God.<sup>28</sup> Drieberge's essay was a characteristic Arminian complaint against the way the Calvinist clergy had monopolized the magisterial, purified Church of the Protestant reformation.

The 123 pages of Drieberge's *Comments* were quickly sold out and soon followed by a *Sequel to the comments* (1727), a book of some 500 pages, and similarly interspersed with Latin quotations (probably intended to put the young Van den Honert at a disadvantage).<sup>29</sup> The book is divided into five sections. The first discusses a number of matters of minor importance, such as Drieberge's contention that the doctrine of universal grace is older than Socinianism, and therefore unconnected with this heresy.<sup>30</sup> The second section demonstrates that universal grace is a scriptural doctrine that can be taught effectively to a broad public, and that it is by nature more suitable to promoting sanctification. There is in any case no reason to make public one's convictions regarding predestination, since this doctrine is a subtle contrivance of the human mind and unnecessary to be

<sup>27</sup> Drieberge, *Aenmerkingen*, 106–112.

<sup>28</sup> Drieberge, *Aenmerkingen*, 118–120.

<sup>29</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen* (1727).

<sup>30</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 7–67.



believed.<sup>31</sup> The third section informs the reader on the means to achieve unity between the Lutherans and the Reformed.<sup>32</sup> Whereas Van den Honert had suggested that the two parties ought to exchange writings for as long as it took the Reformed to convince the Lutherans of the truth, Drieberge proposed that the two parties enter into a brotherhood. Each side would be allowed to continue to adhere to its own beliefs, and only the Word of God would be accepted as the rule of faith. This was not to turn the church of Christ into a repository of all kinds of believers, irrespective of their sentiments. Excluded from the fold would be those who forsook Christ's teachings, Jews, heathens, Turks, Spinozists and atheists, and those who recognized other rules of faith next to the Bible, notably the Roman Catholics. If a union were attempted on these conditions, and ministers would be willing to maintain it, there would be no difficulty at all in discussing mutual differences sparingly, and with due modesty and moderation. Each minister would be free to hold his own views—on predestination, for example—as long as he respected those of his brother. This was and always had been the Remonstrant view, claimed Drieberge. The Counter-Remonstrants were the ones to claim that their view of predestination was a necessary doctrine, and that those who opposed it could not be tolerated. Such events teach us that it is impossible to attain complete agreement on doctrinal issues. Finally, Drieberge observed that 'mutual Forbearance' had to be fostered actively by the magistracy, lest attempts at unity came to nothing. 'The Supreme Authorities are often more advanced in Forbearance than their Spiritual leaders (. . .)'.<sup>33</sup>

The subject of the fourth section is the authority of synods in resolving religious controversies.<sup>34</sup> Differences among those who accept Scripture as the only rule of faith, observes Drieberge, are inevitable. This calls for the exercise of 'Brotherly Love' (Heb. 13:1) as the principal 'way of latitude and leniency'. Instead, theologians have accorded the Christian churches the right to judge religious differences through synods and councils. Apart from the fact that there is no

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<sup>31</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 68–195. Drieberge referred to D. Erasmus, *Opera omnia*, ed. J. le Clerc (1703–1706), vol. III-i, Epistola DCL (to M. Laurinus, 1523), 764. Erasmus argued that certain doctrines believed to be true by theologians need not be made known in so many words to the populace.

<sup>32</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 196–264.

<sup>33</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 249–250.

<sup>34</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 249–388.

scriptural basis for this right (Matth. 18:15–18), in practice these meetings have been characterized by a noticeable lack of moderation, leniency and love for peace. Where Van den Honert declared that synods brought about church unity, Drieberge, referring to William Chillingworth ('one of the best writers on whom the English may pride themselves'), claimed that they have only sown dissension and expelled the spirit of love and forbearance from Christendom.<sup>35</sup> Admittedly, Remonstrants too had a confession, but its claims on the believer's conscience were negligible. Everyone is free to hold opinions contrary to the Arminian articles, as long as their views are scriptural. Drieberge quoted Salomon van Til, who had denied the absolute authority of synods: 'Neither Calvin nor Cocceius has greater authority or power than the most insignificant clergyman; nor is a whole Synod of greater import than a single minister of the Word: and therefore its authority is not valid.'<sup>36</sup> Only Scripture can bind conscience, and yet the obligation to subscribe puts confessions on a par with the Bible. This is contrary to the principles to which Protestants adhere, and the main reason why schisms have hitherto proven irreparable. In the fifth and final section Drieberge countered Van den Honert's accusation that the early Remonstrants were the cause of riots and dissension—a serious allegation, for it not only disqualified them as respectable interlocutors, but also debarred them from civil toleration.<sup>37</sup> At this point, he quoted several diplomatic letters, which were destined to become the most frequently cited proofs of what was regarded as the Republic's official stance in matters concerning toleration. These letters had been sent by the States General to respectively the Canton of Bern (1710),<sup>38</sup> the Republic of Venice (1725), and the Holy Roman Emperor (1725);<sup>39</sup> in them

<sup>35</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 302–307; W. Chillingworth, *The religion of Protestants a safe way to salvation* (1664), 177 (Part I, Ch. IV, § 16).

<sup>36</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 358, 382–385; S. van Til, *Inleydinge tot de prophetische schriften* (1698), 76. Like Heidanus, Van Til was cited by eighteenth-century dissenters to put their Calvinist contemporaries at a disadvantage; see Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 161.

<sup>37</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 389–500.

<sup>38</sup> The Bernese issued edicts against the Mennonites in 1707, 1718, 1722 and 1729. The text of the letter, sent on 15 March 1710 by the Grand Pensionary Heinsius in the name of the States General to the Canton of Bern, circulated in the Netherlands on a broadsheet. It stated on behalf of the Dutch Mennonites 'that they are good and loyal citizens of the land.' *Copia: Van de brief vande Heeren Staaten, geschreeven aan het Canton Bern*; see *Springer-Klassen* 12615.

<sup>39</sup> The letters to Venice and the Emperor (replies to requests made to the States

the High Authorities (in Drieberge's interpretation) defended the freedom to hold and confess openly any religious view based on scriptural evidence.<sup>40</sup>

None of Drieberge's arguments was new, but he was a particularly uncompromising and outspoken defender of Remonstrant libertarian principles. The conclusion to his *Sequel* clearly reveals the influence of Benjamin Hoadly's *The nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ*, to which we shall come back later.<sup>41</sup> It was his intention, Drieberge remarked, to argue that every believer, whether he be minister or layman, has the privilege not to be subjected to any authority other than his sole teacher and king Jesus Christ, whose precepts are to be found in the Gospel and in the sermons and letters of the apostles. Nobody is permitted to arrogate to himself the authority to make the church narrower than Christ and his apostles intended it to be, or to exclude anyone who was not expressly ostracized by them. Thus he, Drieberge, tried to secure against all human violations the supreme authority of the sole 'Lawgiver and Preserver' of Christians. Not the way of authority and dominion, concluded Drieberge, but the way of freedom will ultimately lead to a restoration of Christian concord, where truth is spoken in love (Eph. 4:15).

Drieberge's two tracts were immediately understood as a direct and uncomfortingly open attack on the orthodox confessional public sphere. His contributions to the toleration debate would be reworked and elaborated on in the 1740s by the Mennonite Johannes Stinstra, whose writings I have discussed elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> In the meantime, an anonymous writer who considered the allegation that Dutch Remonstrants suffered persecution to be bold, unthankful, false and in any case imprudent, heavily criticized Drieberge.<sup>43</sup> Van den Honert wrote an *Answer* to Drieberge's *Comments*, in which he deplored the fact that the latter had not written as a scholar but in the manner

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General, asking them to ensure that Dutch Catholics obeyed the Pope) were published in the *Europische Mercurius*, 36-ii (1725), 172-173 and 178-179. The letter to Venice was later incorporated into the best and most complete eighteenth-century overview of Dutch history, Jan Wagenaar's *Vaderlandsche historie* (1758), XIX, 82-84; Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 58-59. Orthodox divines also cited them; cf. Van Hardevelde, *Kerkelyk pleydoy*, 40.

<sup>40</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 393-412.

<sup>41</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 500-506. For Hoadly, see section 4.2 below.

<sup>42</sup> Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*.

<sup>43</sup> [Anon.], *Aenmerkingen over den brief van den heere Drieberge* [*Comments on the letter by* (. . .)] (1728); a summary in *Boekzael* (1728) I, 224-232.

of one who prefers mockery and ridicule to sound argumentation.<sup>44</sup> It later took him almost 200 pages to explain why he refused to discuss Drieberge's *Sequel*; the latter, he claimed, was incapable of proper debate and had therefore ostracized himself from the public.<sup>45</sup> Drieberge may have been the anonymous editor of a famous collection of tracts on toleration published in 1734, known as the Tirion edition,<sup>46</sup> but it testifies to the public church's strength in this period that he otherwise discontinued his polemic. His later *De praedestinatione et gratia* (1745) was intended as a textbook for theology students but also meant to preserve the Arminian heritage for posterity (Drieberge guessed correctly that his book would be the last one on the subject written from an Arminian point of view).<sup>47</sup> He used his contacts with Frans van Limborch to have the book presented to a number of magistrates of impressive rank. These included the clerk of the States General, François Fagel (1659–1746); the political commissioner Van Hees; Johannes Hop (1709–1772), a member of the High Council; and Govert van Slingelandt, Collector General of Holland, and the son of a former Grand Pensionary. Van Hees preferred theologians to refrain from openly discussing doctrinal matters, and regretted Van den Honert's polemic attitude. Van Slingelandt 'and another' fully agreed with Drieberge's book, and Hop had read it with pleasure.<sup>48</sup> Clearly, there were pragmatists, realists, Nicodemists and perhaps even 'indifferentists' at large in the awe-inspiring echelons of political power. It was still the aim of early eighteenth-century Arminians like Drieberge, following Grotius, Episcopius, Brandt, and Van Limborch, to convince such men that their Nicodemism, though welcome, was rather less preferable than a latitudinarian church.

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<sup>44</sup> J. van den Honert, *Antwoord (...) op (...) Joannes Drieberge [Response to (...)]* (1726), 3.

<sup>45</sup> J. van den Honert, *Vertoog der veelvuldige redenen (...) [Discourse on the many reasons (...)]* (1727).

<sup>46</sup> See section 5.6 below.

<sup>47</sup> It was later translated for the same reason: J. Drieberge, *Verhandeling over Gods voorschikking en genade* (1781). Drieberge initially wanted to dedicate the book to Frans van Limborch, but thought it more prudent not to do so.

<sup>48</sup> MS University of Amsterdam, L 46i and V 15b (letters exchanged between F. van Limborch and J. Drieberge, dd. The Hague 2–4–1745 and Rotterdam 10–4–1745).

## 4.2 ENGLISH COMPREHENSION AND SWISS LENIENCY

Intent on reintegrating their brotherhood into the public church, the Remonstrants traditionally set greater store by the power of the secular authorities over the church than did their Reformed colleagues. By calling upon the secular magistrate to proscribe debates on religious differences, the Remonstrants, in the words of Abraham Heidanus, were wolves in sheep's clothing who deceitfully intended to silence sincere believers and deprive them of the truth.<sup>49</sup> Given the Arminian hunt for Reformed Nicodemists, Heidanus' objections were understandable; but Arminian dissenters could hardly take another course. The expulsion of the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dort precluded the later development of latitudinarian factions in the church and the concomitant formation of a power base in politics. There was, in other words, no Dutch counterpart to the Low Church Whig party in the early eighteenth-century Anglican Church. On the other hand, latitudinarians like Burnet, Stillingfleet, Tillotson, and later Hoadly and Clarke closely resembled the Dutch Arminians in their doctrinal views, their penchant for morality, and their Erastianism.<sup>50</sup> Martin Fitzpatrick has described the 'latitudinarian synthesis' as an emphasis on simplicity and rationality, the harmony between Reason and Revelation, the Bible as the exclusive font of essential truths, the general accessibility of these essential truths, non-essential truths as matters of opinion, and the possibility of knowing God sincerely in various ways.<sup>51</sup> In short, latitudinarianism was committed to the ideal of a comprehensive church. It is due mainly to the efforts of French journalists and Dutch dissenters—Arminians and some Mennonites—that the ideas of English latitudinarians were made available to a larger public. In this section we shall look more closely at some of the more influential English latitudinarians (Chillingworth, Tillotson, Burnet, Hoadly and Locke), as well as their Swiss counterparts (Le Clerc, Turretini Jr., Werenfels and Ostervald).

Seventeenth-century Dutch Remonstrants had already been familiar with the more lenient English divines of their day—the minister, poet and historian Gerard Brandt (1626–1685) mentioned a large

<sup>49</sup> Sepp, 'Irenische pogingen', 145–146.

<sup>50</sup> Marshall, 'The ecclesiology of the latitude-men'.

<sup>51</sup> Fitzpatrick, 'Latitudinarianism at the parting of the ways', 211.

number of them in his didactic poem *The peaceable Christian*.<sup>52</sup> Many of them would still have been familiar to later Arminians, if only because Brandt's poetry was still frequently read among early eighteenth-century dissenters. Drieberge, for instance, still quoted John Davenant (1576–1641) to reinforce his rejection of theological colloquies.<sup>53</sup> Drieberge also cited William Chillingworth (1602–1644), who had announced that 'the only fountain of all the Schisms of the Church' is the 'restraining of the word of God from that latitude and generality' prerequisite to any comprehensive church. Chillingworth suggested that Christians ought to be required only to believe Christ, 'and to call no man Master but him only', and concluded that 'Universal Liberty thus moderated, may quickly reduce Christendom to Truth and Unity'.<sup>54</sup> Drieberge's seminal role in bringing English dissent to the notice of Dutch authors is illustrated by the fact that in 1742 the Dutch translator of a work by Pierre Coste prefixed precisely the same passage to his book.<sup>55</sup> Chillingworth's personal device epitomized the core of dissent in England and the Netherlands: 'The BIBLE, I say, the BIBLE only, is the religion of Protestants!'<sup>56</sup> It seems that Chillingworth was promoted in the Netherlands via the journalist Pierre Desmaizeaux (1673–1745), who published *An historical and critical account of the life of William Chillingworth* in 1725. Six years earlier Desmaizeaux had also published a biography of John Hales (1584–1656), and Mosheim later praised both Chillingworth and Hales (who had attended the Synod of Dort, and was highly critical of it) as the wise and pious leaders of the English latitudinarians. He included Desmaizeaux's biography in his own edition of Hales' *Historia Concilii Dordraceni* (1724).<sup>57</sup> Desmaizeaux himself had fled to Switzerland after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, where he studied at the Genevan academy. He eventually left for England

<sup>52</sup> Van Eijnatten, 'Lodestars of latitude'.

<sup>53</sup> Drieberge, *Vervolg van aenmerkingen*, 261–262; J. Davenant, *Ad fraternam communionem inter evangelicas ecclesias restaurandam adhortatio* (1640), 47.

<sup>54</sup> Chillingworth, *The religion of Protestants a safe way to salvation*, 177; the book was not translated into Dutch, but the French translation was well-known; *La religion protestante, une voye sure au salut* (1730); it was mentioned as late as 1789 in [Van Rees], *Aan mijne protestantsche medechristenen in Frankrijk*, 55–57 note.

<sup>55</sup> For Coste, see below, this section.

<sup>56</sup> Orr, *Reason and authority*, 71–114.

<sup>57</sup> J.L. Mosheim, *Oude en hedendaagsche kerklyke geschiedenissen*, vol. IX (1773), 220. Chillingworth's *La religion protestante* (1730) included the French version of Hales' biography.

in 1699, travelling to London via the Dutch Republic, and befriending Bayle on the way. In London Desmaizeaux apparently collaborated with Anthony Collins in writing deistic tracts, and produced biographies on St. Evremond, Boileau, Toland and Bayle. He contributed above all to the *Bibliothèque Raisonnée des Ouvrages des Savants de l'Europe* (1728–1753) and the *Bibliothèque Britannique* (1733–1747).<sup>58</sup> In his contributions, Desmaizeaux paid much attention to deists (Collins, Toland, Tindal, Chubb) and Anglican latitudinarians such as Tillotson, Stillingfleet, Burnet, Hoadly, Clarke, and Whiston.

The way in which Chillingworth later resurfaced in the Netherlands illustrates both the radicalization of eighteenth-century dissent and the decline of latitudinarianism. In 1773 a letter by Justus Opregt ('Justin Candid') containing a translation of an article on the English subscription debate by a certain 'J.R.' in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, was published by *The Rhapsodist*, a moral weekly.<sup>59</sup> 'J.R.' argued that since the Christian religion is the sole source of the New Testament, which Christians are privileged to read at liberty so that they may judge its true meaning, synods and councils cannot have any religious authority. How strange, then, that the Church of England should attempt to control the individual conscience! The Bible alone is the religion of Protestants, 'as the immortal *Chillingworth* demonstrated long ago.' Nor is it certain that the magistracy should have anything to do with religion. The church of Christ stands on a foundation that is much stronger than that of civil magistrates or ecclesiastical councils. The church of Christ stands on the authority of Christ himself, whose church is not of this world; and Christianity is founded on the Messiahship of God's Son. The church of Christ is an inward church, which can never manifest itself nationally. This argument was, in effect, a subversion of the latitudinarian public sphere; we shall meet with many similar arguments in later chapters.

Before the radicalization of eighteenth-century dissent in the 1760s and 1770s, latitudinarians were usually yoked to the Arminian cause of re-establishing a comprehensive national church. John Tillotson is a case in point. Desmaizeaux had supplied a copy of Tillotson's sermons to the Swiss Huguenot Jean Barbeyrac, who translated them

<sup>58</sup> Almagor, *Pierre Des Maizeaux*; Rotondò, 'Stampa periodica olandese', with further literature.

<sup>59</sup> *De Rhapsodist* III (1773), 148–162; the English original is dated Cambridge, 8–7–1772.

into French.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps this translation inspired the Remonstrant H. Verrijn to produce a Dutch version in 1713.<sup>61</sup> Ultimately some 254 sermons by Tillotson were translated, in part by the Collegiant Jan Wagenaar, and published in expensive quarto volumes.<sup>62</sup> The preface to these volumes praises Tillotson (nothing less than an archbishop, as the title page made clear) for demonstrating the plain sense of Scripture rather than twisting it according to the opinions of one sect or another. His moderation, his sense of fallibility, his virtuous conduct and above all his aversion to contrived arguments ensured that Protestants of all denominations could appreciate him. Indeed, the Arminians recognized in Tillotson the latitudinarian *par excellence*.<sup>63</sup> Some Mennonite congregations read his sermons for lack of a preacher,<sup>64</sup> and as late as 1770 the novelist Betje Wolff contrasted 'my Tillotson' favourably with the preachers of her own day.<sup>65</sup> We shall discuss the significance of Tillotson's 'plain style' elsewhere.<sup>66</sup>

As a friend of Le Clerc, Gilbert Burnet hardly needed an introduction to dissenting circles in the Republic. A number of his writings had been translated in the 1680s and 1690s, including his *Exposition of the Thirty-Nine Articles* (1699). The translation is the more interesting in the light of the fact that the 1701 convocation of the Anglican Church condemned it.<sup>67</sup> Burnet's critics found fault with, among other things, his defence of latitude and diversity of opinion in the church. Apparently he wanted to provide room, not just for Anglicans proper, but for Socinians, deists, Quakers, Anabaptists,

<sup>60</sup> J. Tillotson, *Sermons sur diverses matières importantes* (1705–1716).

<sup>61</sup> J. Tillotson, *Uitgelezene mengelstoffen, bestaande in vyftien predikatiën* [*Sermons* (. . .)] (1713). Cf. also Tillotson, *Vijftien uitgelezene predikatiën* (1700), tr. by 'B.J.R.G.'

<sup>62</sup> J. Tillotson, *Alle de predikaatsien* [*Collected sermons*] (1730–1732); this edition also contained Burnet's funeral address. Cf. also Tillotson, *Predikatiën* (1768).

<sup>63</sup> Cf. J. Tillotson, *Goddelyke eigenschappen, verhandelt in XIII. predikatiën* [*Sermons* (. . .)] (1698), with a poem by J. Brandt on Tillotson's death which includes passages in praise of the bishop's pursuit of a unified Anglican church.

<sup>64</sup> MS Leiden BPL 245-XII, A. van der Os to J.J. Schultens, dd. 11–7–1758.

<sup>65</sup> *Briefwisseling van Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken*, 134. Cf. also 139, where Wolff notes that she also read John Sharp (1645–1714), the archbishop of York, another popular latitudinarian preacher who had also been involved in the Prussian unionist programme as a correspondent of Jablonski; J. Sharp, *Alle de predikaatsien* [*The complete sermons* (. . .)] (1752–1756). Tillotson had of course denied eternal punishment in a well-known sermon, which was published with Le Clerc's annotations during the 'Socratic War': *'t Leven van J. Tillotson*, 1768 (1st ed. 1725).

<sup>66</sup> See section 7.5.

<sup>67</sup> D.tr. G. Burnet, *De godgeleertheit, begrepen in een verklaringe der XXXIX artikelen* (1703); reissued in 1719. For the following, Greig, 'Reasonableness of Christianity?'; Greig, 'Heresy hunt'.



Presbyterians, and Independents as well. The accusation reflects Burnet's attempts to achieve a 'mutual forbearance of diversity'. In a letter to Leibniz (1699), he had argued that Protestant unity ought not to be based on doctrinal agreement or dogmatic compromise, but that all parties should be allowed to continue to uphold their own peculiar views. Drieberge would have appreciated this, as well as the *Exposition's* defence of the authority of the Christian prince over the church. He and many others of his generation must also have been acquainted with Burnet's *History of the Reformation* (1679), which enjoyed considerable popularity in England and abroad as a thoroughly Erastian account of English history, to which was appended a call for a comprehensive church. It had been translated into Dutch in 1686.<sup>68</sup>

Although he would later end up as bishop of Winchester, Benjamin Hoadly (1676–1761) is usually referred to in the literature as the bishop of Bangor, since it was in this capacity that he instigated the 'Bangorian controversy'. If anything, Hoadly was the archetype of the Whig clergyman, opposing rebellious Jacobites, confuting, whenever he had the opportunity, the Tory clergy of his day, and generally defending the Hanoverian regime. His politics did not have adverse effects on his career through the highest ranks of the Anglican Church.<sup>69</sup> He resisted religious intolerance, but, as a latitudinarian, at the same time strongly advocated religious unity, doctrinal latitude, and freedom of religious expression. He pleaded for this in his early *Reasonableness of conformity to the Church of England* (1703). His contempt for 'Popish' clerical authority and his thoroughgoing Erastianism became evident in his *Preservative against the principles and practices of the non-jurors* of 1716, which was followed the next year by his no less controversial Bangorian sermon on the nature of the Kingdom of Christ.<sup>70</sup> Hoadly's sermon amounted to the claim that there is no

<sup>68</sup> D.tr. G. Burnet, *Historie van de reformatie van de kerk van Engeland*, Amsterdam 1686; Burnet's *Abridgement of the history of the Reformation* (1682) was translated in 1690 by the Dutch quaker Willem Séwel († 1720).

<sup>69</sup> Sykes, 'Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop of Bangor', 112–156.

<sup>70</sup> B. Hoadly, *The nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ* (1717). See Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 51–54, for an outline of the sermon; Rack, 'Christ's Kingdom not of this world'. Hoadly objected to the claim, made by the High Church opposition to the Revolutionary Settlement, that the church had a right to an existence independent from the state; he regarded the church as an entirely human institution which should be presided over by the state; see Gascoigne, 'Anglican latitudinarianism', 225.

justification for the visible church's power and authority to set standards for orthodoxy and maintain discipline through excommunication. Christ is the only lawful head of the church, but since he does not intervene directly in ecclesiastical affairs, it is up to the private conscience to determine and profess its own beliefs. In itself, of course, the argument was not new. Sectarian mystics had long contended that the church could not exercise discipline because Christ was its supreme and only lawgiver. Moreover, the Dutch Calvinist clergy had often welcomed the claim that Christ is the sovereign King of his church to dispute the authority of the magistracy *in sacra*.<sup>71</sup> What was surely a novelty in the eyes of dissenters and critics, and a shock to the Calvinist clergy, was that an authoritative cleric of a significant church now used the argument to dispute ecclesiastical discipline. The sermon was translated, and included in the Tirion edition of 1734.<sup>72</sup>

Although Van den Honert attempted to appropriate Hoadly for his defence of the public church in his address *De mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, the English bishop did not enjoy much of a reputation in orthodox quarters. His *Plain account of the nature and end of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper* (1735) minimized the meaning of the rite by reducing it to a memorial feast; translated by a certain 'J.D.K.' the following year, it hardly added to Hoadly's standing.<sup>73</sup> Another curious text by Hoadly, published in English in 1715, was immediately followed by its Dutch translation.<sup>74</sup> The text in question was the dedicatory letter to Pope Clement XI in the *Account of the state of the Roman-Catholick religion throughout the world*, supposedly translated from a manuscript by Urbano Cerri, who was mentioned on the title page as secretary to the *Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*.<sup>75</sup> The dedicatory

<sup>71</sup> E.g. W. à Brakel, *De heere Jesus Christus voor de alleene ende souvereine koninck over sijne kercke* (1688).

<sup>72</sup> See section 5.6 below.

<sup>73</sup> D.tr. B. Hoadly, *Klaar berigt van de natuur (. . .) van des Heeren Avondmaal* (1736). Hoadly's book was emulated as late as 1790 by the Reformed divine Fokko Liefsting, in an attempt to restore Christendom to its pristine purity and eliminate dissension: *Het avondmaal van Jesus en deszelfs waarneming meer eenvoudigd gemaakt* (s.a.); cf. *VB* 1790-i, 411-417.

<sup>74</sup> D.tr. [B. Hoadly], *Staat van de Roomsche Catholyke religie* (1715); translated by 'A.G.L.R.G.'. The contents and translation are similar to the French version, except that the reference to Whiston and Clarke in the French edition (17), is lacking in the Dutch.

<sup>75</sup> [B. Hoadly], *Etat present de l'église Romaine dans toutes les parties du monde* (1716). The final chapter in Cerri's tract is called 'Discours, touchant l'état present de la

letter itself was attributed to the ‘Chevalier Richard Steele’, who continued to be regarded as the author by many eighteenth-century readers. In fact, the author was Hoadly. The dedicatory letter on the state of religion in Great Britain amounted to a highly ironical epistle informing the Pope of the curious circumstance that Protestant clerics nowadays considered themselves infallible. The only difference between the Protestant clergy and the Roman hierarchy was that the latter proclaimed its infallibility in so many words while the former did so only through their actions. The Protestant churches enjoyed virtually the same prerogatives as did Rome. In fact, the only difference perspicacious men could find between the two churches was that Romans *could* not err, and that Protestants *did* not err. What Rome claimed not to be able to do in theory, the Protestants asserted that they did not do in fact. In short, if Rome was infallible, Protestants were always right. And this state of affairs was, of course, much to the advantage of Protestants. They could enjoy all the benefits of infallibility without being subject to ridicule and embarrassment for holding a doctrine so patently absurd and shocking. Indeed, the grandeur of being constantly in the right without asserting infallibility was at least as great as the glory of being infallible but always in the wrong. Such were the claims of the synod of Dort (the incontestable decisions of which, said Hoadly, were celebrated by the Dutch), the Reformed synods of France, the general assembly of the Church of Scotland, and Convocation in England. Here authority was based on power as much as right; Protestant infallibility was simply founded on a synodal majority. His Holiness will see that the Protestants have cunningly tricked the people. They possessed the same authority to make decisions as did the Roman church, and yet they could not be accused of maltreating the Word of God.<sup>76</sup>

Partly because of his ecclesiastical status, Hoadly developed a substantial fan club among Dutch dissenters. Drieberge, for example, translated his sermons on Christian discord and free inquiry.<sup>77</sup> Hoadly

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religion Romaine en Angleterre, et la reconciliation avec Rome’ (308–325). The French translator was Michel de la Roche († 1742), one of the less well-known Huguenots who had left France following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and a friend of Pierre Desmaizeaux; see Thomas, ‘Michel de la Roche’. In his various publications, La Roche paid much attention to the worse instances of Calvinist intolerance; he was befriended with Samuel Clarke, William Whiston, and Hoadly.

<sup>76</sup> [Hoadly], *Etat present de l’église Romaine*, 21–22. A similar argument appeared later in the *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, IX (1757), 89–96.

<sup>77</sup> B. Hoadly, *De ware weg ten eeuwigen leven* (1719); the sermons were taken from

not only authored works of a more or less religious purport. He was also a Whig political writer who advised Robert Walpole in ecclesiastical matters.<sup>78</sup> He published several writings on civil government in which he closely followed Locke, using the doctrine of natural rights to argue in favour of the contractual origins of legitimate political power. One implication of Hoadly's message was that illegitimate authority need not be obeyed, a point he had made earlier in his *The measures of submission to the civil magistrate considered*, a sermon preached before the Lord Mayor in 1705, and based, strangely enough, on Romans 13. The sermon was the final instance of Hoadleian philosophy which, in the eventful year of 1748, found its way into the Dutch Republic, together with a sermon on Acts 22:25 on the civil rights of Saint Paul. Subjects, argued Hoadly (against Tory theorists of divine right and passive obedience), were obliged to obey the civil authorities, but only insofar as the latter fulfilled the purpose to which they had been created, that is, to safeguard the public good and govern in exemplary fashion. Unlimited authority is illegitimate, and may be disobeyed.<sup>79</sup> Hoadly retained a Dutch following throughout the eighteenth century. One reviewer could not resist the opportunity of providing a full summary of the controversy surrounding the bishop when discussing the *Briefe über den Zustand der Religion und Wissenschaften in Großbritannien* (1751–1754) by a Lutheran divine, Georg Wilhelm Alberti (1723–1758). In the third volume, Alberti discussed the hierarchical organization of the Anglican Church and provided an extensive account of the Hoadly affair. The reviewer happily ascertained that Alberti sympathized with Hoadly; five years later, the editors of the periodical felt confident enough to publish a short biography of the bishop.<sup>80</sup>

Hoadly's followers, too, were well-known. They included Arthur Ashley Sykes (c. 1684–1756), a supporter of the Arian William Whiston and a participant in virtually every controversy that rocked the

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*Several discourses concerning the terms of acceptance with God* (1718) and *Several tracts formerly published* (1715).

<sup>78</sup> On Hoadly as a political writer, see Browning, *Political and constitutional ideas of the Court Whigs*, 67–88.

<sup>79</sup> *Maatregelen en palen van het gezag der hooge overheden, en de regten en privilegien der onderdanen* (1748). The second sermon, on 'St. Paul's behaviour towards the civil magistrate', had been held by Hoadly in 1708.

<sup>80</sup> G.W. Alberti, *Brieven (. . .) over den tegenwoordigen toestand van den godsdienst en de weetenschappen in Groot Brittannien* (1765); VL 1769-i, 405–410; VL 1774-ii, 78–91 ('De voornaamste levensgevallen van Benjamin Hoadly (. . .)').

Anglican Church during the first half of the century. In 1736, for example, Sykes backed the attempt to have the Test and Corporation Acts repealed. The work that established his reputation as a Hoadleian, *The Innocency of error asserted and vindicated* (1715), was comparatively well-known in the Netherlands, and even translated.<sup>81</sup> Sykes claimed that errors are not punishable if they are involuntary, a message that no doubt found acclaim among Dutch admirers of English latitudinarians. He believed that ecclesiastical peace could be achieved only by latitude and charity, which meant that in practice subscribers should be allowed to deviate from the formularies to which they had, in fact, subscribed. Peter King (1669–1734), Lord Chancellor in England after 1725, is another person of interest. In 1710, he had lent a hand at the impeachment of Henry Sacheverell, the intemperate Jacobite cleric, and defended William Whiston at his heresy trial. His *History of the Apostles' Creed* (1702), 'with critical observations on its several articles', was translated in 1707 by the Mennonite Jakob van Zanten (1638–1730).<sup>82</sup> King's *Enquiry into the constitution, discipline, unity and worship, of the primitive church* (1691) appeared in Dutch translation in 1738.<sup>83</sup> In ten chapters, King provided evidence derived from Ignatius, Clement of Rome, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Novatian, Cyprian, Victorinus, Minucius Felix, and Origen. The anonymous Dutch translator observed that much was said nowadays on the simplicity of the first Christian church. Many people were concerned to revive its manner of exercising public religion, while others considered such ideals illusory and opposed them. He suggested that a historical account written in moderate tone would certainly be of interest to those equable minds concerned with finding the truth rather than strengthening factions. The translator referred his Dutch readers specifically to the concluding section of King's treatise, where the author contrasted the sense of brotherhood among the early Christians with the hatred and resentment within and among contemporary churches, and called upon his countrymen to do their Christian duty and bring about peace

<sup>81</sup> A.A. Sykes, *Onderzoek of in hoe ver eene eenvoudige doling in het stuk van den godsdienst strafbaar is* (1764) (mentioned in *Arrenberg*, 500; possibly a reprint). The book was still warmly applauded in the *Algemeene bibliotheek*, III (1782), 201–202.

<sup>82</sup> D.tr. P. King, *Histoori [sic] van het Symbolum, of geloofs-formulier der apostelen* (1707); the same translation was reissued in 1711 and 1730.

<sup>83</sup> D.tr. P. King, *Beschryving van den rechten staat der eerste Christensche kerke* (1738).

and concord. Such concord, the translator concluded, ought to be procured in the Netherlands, too.

In the second half of the century, radical English dissent—the assertion of individual liberty rather than the latitudinarian attempt to expand the dominant church—was on the rise. At this point a comment on the dissenter John Locke is in order. Locke can be, and was, interpreted as pursuing a comprehensive church. His *Epistola de tolerantia* (1689) was valued in the Netherlands as much as anywhere else.<sup>84</sup> However, contrary to what the enormous number of commentaries on the *Epistola* in contemporary scholarship may lead one to believe, it was all but overshadowed by *The reasonableness of Christianity* (1695). This latter book was available in the Netherlands in several French translations (1696, 1703, 1715, 1731, and 1741), as well as in Dutch (1729). The *Reasonableness* was so important because it explicitly reduced all necessary doctrine to the single proposition that Jesus is the Messiah. As such, it afforded a point of departure for all critics of the Calvinist confessional public sphere. It undermined all systematic defences of doctrine and provided a theoretical alternative to the confessional establishment in the form of a universal church. Its reputation was not enhanced by the fact that those who (like Locke) put little value on Trinitarian doctrine generally admired the work, and by the fact that the controversial Hobbes had made a similar claim. ‘The (*Unum Necessarium*) Onely Article of Faith,’ Hobbes asserted, ‘which the Scripture maketh simply Necessary to Salvation, is this, that JESUS IS THE CHRIST’.<sup>85</sup> The later editions of the widely disseminated French translation contained an essay by Pierre Coste, the *Dissertation où sur les principes du Christianisme raisonnable on établit le vrai & l’unique moyen de réunir tous les Chrétiens, malgré la difference de leurs sentimens*. This essay was also published separately in Dutch translation.<sup>86</sup> Coste had correctly interpreted Locke’s aims, for as the Englishman had said of his own book, ‘it tends to peace and union among Christians’.<sup>87</sup> This is also how his work was read by the Dutch Arminians.<sup>88</sup> At the same time, Locke’s *Reasonableness* functioned as

<sup>84</sup> For relevant literature, see Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*.

<sup>85</sup> T. Hobbes, *Leviathan* (1651), III, Chapter 43, 325.

<sup>86</sup> D.tr. P. Coste, *Verhandeling over de vereeniging der christenen*, Harlingen 1742; a summary in Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 72–80.

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, 236.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. the Amsterdam 1705 edition of Locke’s *Epistola*, which appeared together with Samuel Strimesius’ *De pace ecclesiastica* under the aegis of Van Limborch.

a catalyst in the radicalization of the Dutch toleration debate. It was valued until the end of the century—one of the best books written on Christianity since the time of the apostles, said a later commentator.<sup>89</sup>

The Dutch reception of the so-called ‘Swiss Triumvirate’, Jean-Alphonse Turretini, Samuel Werenfels, and Jean-Frédéric Ostervald closely resembled that of the English latitudinarians.<sup>90</sup> These Swiss Reformed divines have often been associated with Arminianism, and indeed there were many contacts between the Swiss Reformed and Dutch Remonstrants. The Swiss represented the state-sponsored latitudinarian Calvinism which the latter had unsuccessfully been trying to establish for so many decades. Geneva in particular had of late been shedding its orthodoxy. The obligation to subscribe to the *Formula Consensus* was ended by the Venerable Company of Geneva in 1706, the formulary itself abolished definitively in 1725. Such far-reaching reforms were inconceivable in the Netherlands, where the Heidelberg’s 52 Sundays and the *Canones* of Dort were retained in their original form until the end of the century (and beyond). To the orthodox Dutch clergy it seemed that Swiss Calvinism was being Arminianized. They were perfectly correct, of course—Turretini’s own theological system has recently been characterized as an assimilation to Calvinism of Remonstrant theology.<sup>91</sup> In a telling letter written to Le Clerc in 1711, Turretini inquired whether he could soon expect reprints of Limborch’s handbook of theology and Le Clerc’s New Testament; apparently the Genevan bookshops were sold out of copies.<sup>92</sup>

The important link in Dutch-Swiss latitudinarian ‘Calvinism’ was Jean le Clerc himself, and no one was more devoted to the unionist cause than he. For all the many pages he wrote in defence of toleration, his main premise was that Christians could agree on a minimalist creed, and that a Christian concord of sorts was possible. Much of what Le Clerc stood for can be appreciated by taking his early years in Geneva into account. There the religious scene had been dominated by François Turretini, Jean-Alphonse’s father, who was able to push through the *Consensus* in opposition to the

<sup>89</sup> VL 1774-ii, 162–166.

<sup>90</sup> Geiger, ‘Die Unionsbestrebungen der schweizerischen reformierten Theologie’; Klauber, ‘The drive toward Protestant union’; Merk, ‘Von Jean-Alphonse Turretini’.

<sup>91</sup> Klauber, *Between Reformed scholasticism and pan-Protestantism*.

<sup>92</sup> Pitassi, *De l’orthodoxie aux lumières*, 52.

theology of Saumur. Le Clerc, too, was obliged to sign ecclesiastical documents to become a preacher, which he duly did. However, he soon ventilated criticism in his *Liberii de Sancto Amore epistolae theologicae* (1681), which he published anonymously at Saumur. When he returned to Geneva he was required to sign articles testifying to his belief in the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. He left Geneva soon after for the Netherlands, never to return. In the Republic, Le Clerc joined the Remonstrant Brotherhood. He generally took the middle way between concord and toleration, the way of Episcopius and other prominent Remonstrants. Unity was desirable, but not to be achieved at the cost of coercion or persecution; for it could be had on the basis of a minimalist creed. In Le Clerc's view, the use of reason unavoidably implied a measure of religious diversity.

Le Clerc directly influenced the Dutch toleration debate by two treatises which he appended to his editions of Grotius' *De veritate religionis Christianae*.<sup>93</sup> One of the treatises was entitled *De eligenda inter Christianos dissentientes sententia* (in the 1709 and later editions); the other was *Contra indifferentiam religionum* (included in all editions from 1724 onwards). In 1728, both treatises were translated into Dutch and added to the Dutch version of *De veritate*.<sup>94</sup> Le Clerc regarded his treatises as supplements to Grotius' incomparable 'opus aureum'. In *De eligenda* he argued that a man convinced of the truth of the Gospel is obliged to attach himself to a truly Christian community, but only on condition that the community in question makes due allowance for dissenting views. In spite of the divided condition of Christendom, all Christians agree on certain truths. These truths comprise a 'summa Religionis Christianae', summed up in the Apostles' Creed. Although Christians agree on the foundation of faith, there is discord among them because God created man with freedom of choice. Without contention, there would be few choices to make, and, in this sense at least, the discord among Christians enables men to choose the path of truth and virtue. To which confession, then, should a Christian adhere? A Christian, claims Le Clerc, is a person who by virtue of his own honesty will be led irrevocably to embrace the minimalist creed outlined in the Creed. He had therefore best join that religious community which accepts only the New

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<sup>93</sup> For the following, see De Vet, 'Jean LeClerc, an enlightened propagandist of Grotius'.

<sup>94</sup> See section 5.2 below.



Testament as the rule of faith, discards all human additions, and leaves him the freedom to determine his own 'formula fidei' for himself. *De eligenda* concludes with a plea for the reunion of Christians on the basis of a minimalist creed. Le Clerc, who admired the Anglican Church, shared the English latitudinarians' Erastian views. He was delighted with Tindal's argument in *The rights of the Christian Church asserted* (1706) that the government should control the appointment of clergymen to prevent the church from becoming an independent power in the state.<sup>95</sup> Hence also Le Clerc's interest in the unionist attempts of Frederick I of Prussia and for the latter's support for the unionism of Turretini and his circle.

Jean-Alphonse Turretini (1671–1737) had been appointed professor of church history at the Academy of Geneva in 1696 and obtained the theological chair in 1705. His colleague Samuel Werenfels (1657–1740) was professor of theology at Basel, while Jean-Frédéric Ostervald (1663–1747) was a pastor at Neufchatel. These were formidable men on account of their intellectual achievements and their connections with the Swiss and German political authorities. Given the widespread approval these Swiss latitudinarians met with elsewhere, it is surprising that their influence on Dutch religious life has never been gauged. It is clear, again, that their writings were initially welcomed by the dissenters. Among Reformed divines the interest was less pronounced, or at least less obvious, particularly in the first half of the century; the larger part of the orthodox Calvinist clergy simply ignored them. The greatest Dutch popularizer of the Swiss *triumviri* was a dissenter—not an Arminian, however, but a Mennonite called Marten Schagen (1700–1770). Schagen was a self-taught bookseller, pastor, writer, and a member of the *Dutch Literary Society* at Leiden. He taught himself Latin, Hebrew, English and German at an early age and began to write essays which he declaimed in a private circle of like-minded people. His later biographer noted that Schagen believed in the apostolic truths of Christendom, rejected paedobaptism and the swearing of oaths, and had a heartfelt aversion to Calvinist predestination.<sup>96</sup> Schagen published historical works to justify the social position of Mennonitism. In his *History of the Christians commonly called the Waldenses* (1732), Schagen pointed out that this group of oppressed Protestants resembled the Mennonites most

<sup>95</sup> Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, 50–51.

<sup>96</sup> J. Cuperus, *Marten Schagen* (. . .), *plechtig gedagt, in eene bykrede* (1770), 12, 28.

of all. Since the States General had openly supported the Waldenses in the previous year, after the duke of Savoy had formally outlawed them, Schagen's inference with regard to the Netherlands was clear.<sup>97</sup> Similarly, in his *Reformation of the Baptists* (1743), Schagen sought to demonstrate that the Mennonites were not the confused enthusiasts and despicable heretics they were so often taken to be.<sup>98</sup> He also translated the edition of Josephus revised by the Leiden classicist Sigebertus Havercamp (1684–1742), and wrote prayer day sermons, expositions of the Mennonite faith, and a number of periodicals.

As far as the Dutch toleration debate is concerned, Schagen's most important periodical are the *Diversions*. It appeared every three months from 1732 to 1740, with essays by foreign authors on theology, history, philosophy, natural science, medicine, geography, poetry and law.<sup>99</sup> It was a treasure-trove for any layman interested in toleration and irenicism, and in state-of-the-art discussions of related topics ranging from philosophy to natural theology. It contained translations of writings by Samuel Clarke (*Discourse concerning the being and attributes of God*, 1705), John Balguy (*Collection of tracts moral and theological*, 1734) and John Locke (*An essay concerning human understanding*, from Coste's French edition of 1735). It included pieces by Jean-Pierre de Crousaz on human freedom (*Logique*, 1736) and the Bremen Calvinist Gerard Kulenkamp on prejudice (*Dissertatio publica de praepudicio auctoritas*, 1722).<sup>100</sup> Turretini Jr. is represented by substantial excerpts from his *Historiae ecclesiasticae* (1734) and essays from the *Cogitationes et dissertationes theologicae* (1711, 1737).<sup>101</sup> Werenfels contributed to Schagen's *Diversions* with a moral essay from his *Opuscula theologica* (1718).<sup>102</sup> Schagen's contribution to Dutch latitudinarianism

<sup>97</sup> M. Schagen, *Historie der christenen, die men gemeenlyk Waldensen noemt* (1765; 2nd ed.).

<sup>98</sup> M. Schagen, *De reformatie der Nederlandsche doopsgezinden* (1744).

<sup>99</sup> *Godgeleerde, historische, filosofische, natuur- genees- en aerdrykskundige, poëtische en regtsgeleerde vermakelykheden* (1732–1740).

<sup>100</sup> *Vermakelykheden*, no. 5 (1733); Clarke, translated by 'E.V.C.A.'; nos. 19–20 (1738); Balguy, translated by 'J.S.C.' = J.S. Centen (a dissenter and merchant at Amsterdam); nos. 15–16 (1736), no. 20 (1738–1740); Locke; no. 17 (1736); De Crousaz; no. 10 (1734), nos. 11–12, 14 (1735); Kulenkamp. Cf. also the excerpt from Thomas Stackhouse (1677–1752, Anglican divine who had served as a minister at Amsterdam), *A complete body of speculative and practical divinity* (1734), in no. 17 (1736), and J.F. Budde's *Elementa philosophia instrumentalis* in nos. 1–4 (1732–1733).

<sup>101</sup> *Vermakelykheden*, nos. 9–10 (1734), nos. 12–14 (1735), nos. 15–17 (1736), no. 18 (1737), nos. 19–20 (1738); *Historiae ecclesiasticae*; no. 12 (1735), nos. 18–19 (1737); *Cogitationes*.

<sup>102</sup> *Vermakelykheden*, no. 10 (1734). Werenfels' *Oratio de recto theologi zelo* (1722) was

exceeded the rich contents of the *Diversions*. We have already encountered him as the translator and publisher of Pfaff. He later published (and probably also translated) Pfaff's *Dissertationes de praepudiciis theologicis* (1719).<sup>103</sup> He helped bring the Swiss debates on the *Formula Consensus* to the attention of the public by rendering into Dutch the *Formulaire de consentement des églises réformées de Suisses* (1722). This translation of the *Formula Consensus* was the anonymous work of a critical Huguenot, Barthélemy Barnaud (1692–1747), who also attached an anti-predestinarian commentary.<sup>104</sup> Schagen's edition of Werenfels' sermons further included a translation of the latter's *Cogitationes generales de ratione uniendi ecclesias Protestantes*.<sup>105</sup> Schagen later went on tirelessly to render James Hervey and Philip Doddridge into Dutch. The year in which Schagen died witnessed a reissue of his translation of Ostervald's *Reflexions sur la Bible* (1729), and a reviewer remarked on the universal respect commanded by this Swiss author among Christians of very different persuasions.<sup>106</sup> The manner in which the *triumviri* had made headway into the Netherlands is illustrated by the fact that a devotional tract by Werenfels, translated earlier by Schagen, was reissued again in 1793 by an orthodox Calvinist preacher.<sup>107</sup>

From the point of view of the Dutch toleration debate, Jean-Alphonse Turretini was the most significant member of the triumvirate. His three-volume *Opera omnia theologica, philosophica et philologica* was published in Friesland during the 1770s.<sup>108</sup> It brought together

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published by Marten Schagen as *Redenwoering van den waren en valschen yver der godgeleerden* (1724).

<sup>103</sup> D.tr. C.M. Pfaff, *Redenwoering over de gebreken der kerkelyken, benevens de hulpmiddelen tegen dezelve* (1732). Several writings by Pfaff seem to have been reissued at Amsterdam in 1738, by the publisher Z. Romberg.

<sup>104</sup> D.tr. *Formula consensus*, Amsterdam 1723; the motto is from Erasmus: 'Summa nostrae religionis pax est & unanimitas'. Schagen also translated *Eenwuldige beydenis en uitlegging van het rechtzinnige geloof* (1724).

<sup>105</sup> Included in *Opuscula, theologica, philosophica et philologica* (1718).

<sup>106</sup> J.-F. Ostervald, *De sleutel des Bybels* (1770); *VL* 1770-i (vol. IV), 285–288.

<sup>107</sup> S. Werenfels, *Avondmaals-voorbereiding over 1 Kor. XI:26* (1793); reissued by Brunsveld de Blau. Even the orthodox *NB* printed a letter by Werenfels, previously published in the *Museum Helveticum* II, 625; *NB* 1780-ii, 206–214. Like his colleague Turretini, Werenfels had a reputation for not being as orthodox as he should have been. Cf. Werenfels' account of the problems related to the doctrine of predestination; S. Werenfels, *Zwaarigheden over het leerstuk der predestinatie* (1756). The book was refuted by a Reformed apologist: J. Tobitson, *Het gevoelen der predestinatie ontheft van nieuwe zwaarigheden* [*Views on predestination freed from new objections*] (1764); I have found no data concerning Tobitson.

<sup>108</sup> A very positive review in *VL* 1776-i, 561–564.

a number of influential treatises, such as *Theses de theologia naturali, De articulis fundamentalibus*, and the famous *Nubes testium*. Again, dissenters did most to popularize his writings.<sup>109</sup> *Nubes testium* (1719), Turretini's plea for peace, moderation and concord, was published in Dutch in 1729.<sup>110</sup> The Arminian translator, Jan Suderman, claimed that many Reformed were affected by the discord among Protestants. An interesting combination of two latitudinarian writings appeared together in one volume in 1746.<sup>111</sup> One was Turretini's well-known *De theologo veritatis et pacis studioso* (1705), which, as the anonymous editor remarked, could now belatedly be offered in Dutch translation (academics knew the Latin version well enough).<sup>112</sup> The other book was *A rational catechism: or, an instructive conference* (1687), by the English merchant William Popple († 1708), who is mostly known for having translated Locke's *Epistola* into English.<sup>113</sup> Popple was concerned to point out that theologians had corrupted the original simplicity of the Gospel by inventing all kinds of mysteries, and that a return to the fundamental articles would heal the discord in Christendom.

Dutch critics made use of the English and Swiss latitudinarians discussed in this section, but not necessarily because the arguments for toleration put forward by these foreign writers were novel. The latter were appropriated mainly to give the claims of domestic dissenters an authority they would otherwise have lacked. For all their erudition and moderation, in the end the great Episcopius and Van

<sup>109</sup> E.g. J.A. Turretini, *Commentarius theoretico-practicus in epistolas Sancti Pauli ad Thessalonicos* (1739); D.tr. *Aantekeningen (. . .) over de brieven van den heiligen Paulus aan de Thessalonicansen* (1750), tr. by the Mennonite M. van Maurik. Turretini, *In Pauli apostoli ad Romanos epistolae capita XI. praelectiones criticae, theologica et concionariae* (1741); D.tr. *Verklaaring der XI eerste hoofdeelen van Paulus Brief aen den Romeinen* (1749), by the Mennonite Daniel Scharff.

<sup>110</sup> D.tr. J.A. Turretini, *Wolke van getuigen* (1729), tr. by Jan Suderman.

<sup>111</sup> [W. Popple], *Beredeneerd onderwijs in de gronden van den godsdienst (. . .)* and J.A. Turretini, *Eene redenvoering over de pligt van eenen waarheid- en vredelievenden godgeleerden* (1746).

<sup>112</sup> *De theologo veritatis* was available in J.A. Turretini, *Orationes academicae* (1737), 23–60; and *Opera omnia*, vol. III (1776), 365–385. The address was well-known throughout Protestant Europe and included five rules on how to combine truth and charity: (1) do not intrude into the divine mysteries; (2) do not dispute on non-fundamental issues; (3) appreciate that men can and do err; (4) do not put forward the opinions of others in hateful fashion; (5) concern yourself with real issues and not with words.

<sup>113</sup> An earlier edition of *A rational catechism* had appeared at Amsterdam in 1712. The 1746 Dutch translation contains a précis of Popple's tract by Jean le Clerc, taken from the *Bibliothèque universelle et historique* IX (1717, for 1688), 95–105.

Limborch were merely dissenters who remained beyond the pale. Nonetheless, Dutch Arminian and foreign latitudinarian writing did achieve some success in Calvinist quarters, as we shall see in the following section.

### 4.3 APOLOGIZING FOR THE BROAD CHURCH

Van Limborch's *Theologia Christiana ad praxin pietatis ac promotionem pacis Christianae* (1686)—the full title clearly reveals the Arminian irenicist ideal—was reprinted more often than seems to have been warranted by the depressing developments in Remonstrant demography; a fifth impression appeared in 1736.<sup>114</sup> This theological handbook gave much cause for alarm at the South Holland Synod in 1730, as we saw, when rumours suggested that Calvinist theology students showed a suspicious predilection for the *Theologia Christiana*.<sup>115</sup> However, it took an Englishman, who had no anxiety that his career opportunities would be damaged by speaking out, to give a voice to Drieberge's underground following of Nicodemists within the Reformed Church. This section is devoted to writers, in particular Henry Goodricke, who attempted to integrate latitudinarian ideals into the Calvinist tradition.

The controversy surrounding Goodricke began in 1766, when the professors Bonnet and Van der Kemp outlined their clerical view on religious toleration.<sup>116</sup> The debate caught the attention of more people than ever, while arguments were put forward with greater emphasis than before. As Van der Kemp noted, it would have been unthinkable in former years that a Reformed professor be contradicted in public.<sup>117</sup> Henry Goodricke (c. 1741–1784), the son of an English diplomat, launched the debate. Goodricke was a well-to-do jurist who had enrolled as a student at the Groningen academy, where in 1760 he wrote a dissertation under the supervision of

<sup>114</sup> D.tr. *Christelyke godgeleerdheid* (1701). The later Latin editions also contain Van Limborch's *Relatio historica de origine et progressu controversiarum in Foederato Belgio de praedestinatione*; D.tr. P. van Limborch, *Kort en beknopt verhaal* (...) (1715), tr. by the Remonstrant preacher Johannes de Goede (1665–1738).

<sup>115</sup> Kist, 'Aanteekeningen uit de synodale vergaderingen', 291; see also section 4.1 above.

<sup>116</sup> See section 3.1 above.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Van den Berg, 'Tussen ideaal en realiteit', 235.

Frederik Adolf van der Marck. The latter was, to put it mildly, a suspect tutor, and this explains the dynamite in the theses attached to Goodricke's dissertation. 'Unicuique libere est sentiendum in omnibus scientiis', stated thesis VIII, 'maxime vero in illis, quae aeternum hominis statum spectant.' The next thesis, quoting Werenfels, repudiated human authority in religious matters. Thesis X claimed that civil toleration was a matter of both positive and natural law. Thesis XI stated that all forms of outward religious worship ought to be free. Thesis XVI cast doubt on the distinction between clergy and laity. Thesis XVII disputed ecclesiastical autonomy, and so on.<sup>118</sup> Goodricke, who left the Republic for England in 1772, later, as a member of parliament, supported the plea to abolish subscription, declaring that 'there ought to be no tie on men's professions of faith.'<sup>119</sup>

Throughout the debate, Goodricke was careful not to disqualify himself as a 'Moderate' or a 'Tolerant', as someone whose orthodoxy was more than questionable, and who ought to be associated with the Arminian critique. One of his later contributions to the debate was pointedly called *The interests of Christian liberty and toleration in the public church of the Netherlands defended on Protestant and Reformed principles* (1772–1773).<sup>120</sup> Earlier, the English jurist had attacked Bonnet and Van der Kemp in an anonymous Latin tract, contending that confessions are man-made and therefore fallible, that the universal church is much broader than the Reformed, and that Calvinist professors revealed themselves as hierarchical Papists.<sup>121</sup> These were familiar arguments, which Goodricke repeated at greater length in an *Essay to clarify certain matters* (1768), written in the vernacular so that every Dutchman could judge for himself.<sup>122</sup> The lengthy essay itself is of interest here because of the authorities Goodricke mentioned in support of his contentions. It is clear that he derived many of his references from the books written by Drieberge in the 1720s and Stinstra in the 1740s.

Goodricke provided nine characteristics of the 'so-called Moderates' in the public church. (1) 'Moderates' uphold only the truth of those

<sup>118</sup> H. Goodricke, *Tentamina jurisprudentiae rationalis de iure puniendi* (1760).

<sup>119</sup> Quoted in Van den Berg, 'Tussen ideaal en realiteit', 220.

<sup>120</sup> Van den Berg, 'Tussen ideaal en realiteit', 223 note 25; H. Goodricke, *De belangen der Kristelyke vryheid en verdraagzaamheid* (1772–1773).

<sup>121</sup> Van den Berg, 'Tussen ideaal en realiteit', 226–227.

<sup>122</sup> [H. Goodricke], *Proeve ter opheldering van sommige zaaken* (1768).

doctrines mentioned in the confessions insofar as they consider them fundamental, and on the exclusive authority of Scripture (rather than a synod). (2) They consider certain Calvinist doctrines to be phrased too precisely, in a manner detrimental to Christian freedom. (3) They hold certain doctrines as human contrivances. (4) They believe that religion is concerned more with the inward condition of the human heart and the virtuous life than doctrinal accuracy. (5) They regard the outward organization of the church as a human creation, so that synodal authority is anything but absolute. (6) They claim that accusations of heterodoxy should be made only when the error in question has been proved beyond any doubt. (7) They refuse to express the contents of faith in artificial, non-biblical words. (8) They are strongly opposed to enthusiasm. (9) They are acutely aware of their own fallibility and the limitations of the human understanding.<sup>123</sup> As a true 'Moderate', Goodricke rejected subscription out of hand. However, asserting that confessions are necessary in some cases, he also rejected Drieberge's and Stinstra's radical anti-synodal views. This latter caveat was probably a ploy to prevent his being associated with the 'Tolerant' dissenters, for Goodricke went on to state that much can be said for the arguments adduced by these two dissenters, and that they had never really been convincingly refuted. Significantly, he claimed that their arguments had previously been defended by Chillingworth, and, with 'much understanding, power and judgement', also by Francis Blackburne (1705–1787), whose notoriously radical denunciation of confessions he recommended to his Dutch readers.<sup>124</sup> In another attempt to validate his reasoning in the eyes of the clergy, Goodricke observed that his views on the use of confessions were comparable to those of English Presbyterians such as Owen, Watts, Doddridge, and Samuel Chandler (1693–1766). He also recommended Isaac Watts' *Rational foundation of a Christian church* (1747), a work which he later translated to coach the Dutch clergy in the standards of leniency they so regretfully lacked. Watts' ideas,

<sup>123</sup> Goodricke, *Proeve ter opheldering van sommige zaaken*, 33–40.

<sup>124</sup> Goodricke, *Proeve ter opheldering van sommige zaaken*, 48–49; [F. Blackburne], *The confessional; Or, a full and free inquiry into the right, utility, edification, and success, of establishing systematical confessions of faith and doctrine in Protestant churches* (1766). Blackburne, an Anglican with Unitarian leanings whose book caused a commotion in England, frequently refers to Locke and especially Hoadly. See Fitzpatrick, 'Latitudinarianism at the parting of the ways'; Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in eighteenth-century England*, 47–62.

he said, are 'so natural, Scriptural and Reformed' that they are perfectly suited to fostering truth, love, peace and concord among Christians.<sup>125</sup> But English Presbyterians no longer enjoyed a reputation for orthodoxy, and Goodricke hardly convinced his adversaries.

Goodricke's own position amounts to the following. A formulary may be subscribed to, but no subscriber can be held to approve of all the doctrines mentioned therein, since he is free to determine the fundamentals of faith on the basis of his personal inquiry into the nature of scriptural truth.<sup>126</sup> The authority of synods is to be rejected and the Synod of Dort condemned for causing a schism.<sup>127</sup> Moreover, the exclusion of citizens from the honours, pleasures and benefits of civil offices on account of their religious beliefs is contrary to good politics, natural justice, and the Protestant faith.<sup>128</sup> Actually, the difference between Goodricke on the one hand and Drieberge and Stinstra on the other is slight. The main distinction is that Goodricke attempted to justify Nicodemists, rather than simply abolish all confessions. He evidently favoured comprehension, and it is hardly surprising that Bonnet and Van der Kemp indignantly attacked him. Goodricke repeatedly emphasized the apostolic commandment to pursue concord and forbearance. He supported a broad and inclusive church, and, given his many doubts about the authority of the Synod of Dort, may have been a crypto-Arminian into the bargain.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>125</sup> Goodricke, *Proeve ter opheldering van sommige zaaken*, 41–47, n. O; Watts, *De redelyke grondvesting, gedaente en orde eener Christen kerke* (1772), tr. by Goodricke. In his foreword Goodricke repeated his claim in the *Proeve* that the Dutch clergy could learn much from this work, and that he himself did not completely reject church discipline. Goodricke also made references (97, n. X) to Richard Baxter (1615–1691), Werenfels, Turretini Jr., Ostervald, Hoadly, and Clarke. On Baxter, see Wood, *Church unity without uniformity*; on Watts and Doddridge, see also section 7.5 below.

<sup>126</sup> Goodricke, *Proeve ter opheldering van sommige zaaken*, 49–51.

<sup>127</sup> Goodricke, *Proeve ter opheldering van sommige zaaken*, 71–86. Goodricke claimed that the authority of synods was explicitly recognized by the Dutch and Scottish churches, the Westminster confession, the Leiden *Synopsis purioris theologiae*, Beza, Walaeus, Voet, François Turretini, Johannes à Marck, and Johannes van der Kemp. The Cocceians especially have argued against synodal constraints, above all Vitringa, Van Til, and Heidanus.

<sup>128</sup> Goodricke, *Proeve ter opheldering van sommige zaaken*, 88–95; Goodricke refers to Schultens' translations of Doddridge's sermons; see section 7.5 below.

<sup>129</sup> Cf. an anonymous tract seeking to demonstrate that Goodricke, Watts and Doddridge defended the same views regarding toleration as did the Remonstrants: [Anon.] *Proeve ter vergelyking tusschen de tolerantie van den Heer H. Goodricke en de gevoelens der Doctoren Is. Watts en Ph. Doddridge met die der Remonstranten* [Essay comparing Mr. H. Goodricke's toleration and the opinions of doctors I. Watts and P. Doddridge with those of the Remonstrants] (1771); see also *Vrind-broederlyke brief aan de Remonstranten en de zo genaemde tolerantanten* [Friendly and brotherly letter to the Remonstrants and so-called tolerantants] (1772).



In a later tract he boldly claimed that most Dutch divines believed that subscribers need not consider all articles to correspond exactly with Scripture, as their ancestors had demanded, they now distinguished between necessary articles and less important ones.<sup>130</sup> No wonder that an orthodox contestant felt called upon to discuss ‘the considerable difference between the doctrine of the Reformed Church and that of the Remonstrants.’<sup>131</sup> A reviewer who surveyed the dispute was led to a similar conclusion. There seemed to be two ways of interpreting the public church’s doctrine, he observed, the one strict and the other lenient.<sup>132</sup> Interestingly, in *The interests of Christian liberty and toleration* (1772) Goodricke later expressed his agreement with the German theologian Johann Gottlieb Töllner, who argued that a preacher unable to agree with his church’s confessions had the duty to remain within it so that he could spread the pure Gospel.<sup>133</sup> Goodricke’s departure for England in the same year may be regarded as symbolic of the changing of the guard that took place at this time; for as we shall see, the influence of German writers would soon surpass by far that of the English.

The debate between Goodricke and the orthodox was primarily held in Groningen, Leiden and Utrecht. Elsewhere, too, anxious writers on either side put pen to paper to justify the existence of Nicodemists in the public church. The Frisians added to the discussion with a Dutch speciality, the so-called ‘barge conversations’, which usually had several fellow travellers, inadvertently thrown into each others’ company, discuss weighty issues.<sup>134</sup> Also from Friesland was an essay on religious toleration by a supporter of ‘true orthodoxy’, who argued that the differences between Calvinists and Arminians

<sup>130</sup> Van den Berg, ‘Tussen ideaal en realiteit’, 231.

<sup>131</sup> ‘F.J. van Oldenburg’, *Het aanmerklyk verschil tusschen de leer der gereformeerde kerk en die der remonstranten in Nederland* [*The considerable difference between the doctrines of the Reformed Church and those of Dutch Remonstrants*] (1769). F.J. van Oldenburg may be a pseudonym for Frederik Willem Boers (1743–1815) a high-ranking official in the service of the V.O.C.

<sup>132</sup> *VL* 1770-i (vol. IV), 100.

<sup>133</sup> See Van den Berg, ‘Tussen ideaal en realiteit’, 246; also section 6.4 below. This rationalized Nicodemism was also suggested by the Remonstrant Jan Konijnenburg, *Lofreden op Simon Episcopus* [*Eulogy on (. . .)*] (1791), VII: ministers must prudently teach doctrines which the prejudices of their age require them to dissemble, making clear to their congregations that they are not fundamental.

<sup>134</sup> [Anon.], *Schuite praatje tusschen een burger en een boer, wegens de verhandeling over de tolerantie of verdraagzaamheid in het stuk van den godsdienst* [*Barge conversation between a burger and a peasant concerning the treatise on religious toleration or forbearance*] (1769).

(and Lutherans and Mennonites) were not fundamental, and that the one party could easily tolerate the other in the same church. However, since the few moderate divines who could be found in the United Provinces were no match for the great number of zealots, the authorities would have to use their power to achieve unified congregations. There was no need for them to abolish formularies, because this would lead only to chaos. All they had to do was ensure that the formularies were no longer taken seriously. Ministers who brought their colleagues to task for deviating from established doctrine were to be punished heavily to set an example for other would-be rioters. Within several months, the Frisian States had forbidden the sale of this manifestly anticlerical pamphlet.<sup>135</sup> Other Frisian pamphleteers suggested that the author was a Reformed minister, a Nicodemist 'hiding' in the public church, or perhaps even a magistrate who had no scruples in trampling underfoot the oath he had taken to maintain and defend the Reformed religion.<sup>136</sup>

Apart from the subscription issue, history captured the imaginations. There had already been intensive debates on the proper historical interpretation of events leading up to the Synod of Dort. One of the discussions early in the century had been held between Johannes Brandt, Gerard's son, and the Calvinist Jacob Leydekker, the former criticizing the latter's *Honour of the national Synod of Dort*.<sup>137</sup> The issue was still considered delicate as late as 1754, when the multi-volume *National history* by the Collegiant Jan Wagenaar was criticized for its biased treatment of the controversy over Arminianism. Wagenaar even sought a patron among the Amsterdam magistrates, who could protect him against the clergy.<sup>138</sup> The Remonstrant Abraham A. van der Meersch, one of the sharpest critics of the Reformed clergy, was obliged to absolve the Arminians of having conspired to murder Prince Maurice in 1623 (an accusation levelled at them by Comrie

<sup>135</sup> *Verhandeling over de tolerantie of verdraagzaamheid in het stuk van den godsdienst* [*Treatise on religious toleration or forbearance*] (1769).

<sup>136</sup> Van Sluis, 'Verlicht en verdraagzaam?', 159–162. Cf. also a satire on the orthodox rejection of union with the Remonstrants; [Anon.], *De onmogelykheid om de tegenwoordige geschillen te vereffenen, tusschen onze publieke Kerk en die der Remonstranten* [*The impossibility of settling the differences between our public church and the Remonstrants*] (s.a.)

<sup>137</sup> J. Brandt, *Verantwoording van de Historie der Reformatie* [*Justification of the History of the Reformation*] (1705); J. Leydekker, *Eere van de Nationale Synode van Dordrecht* (1705–1707). Brandt stressed his father's irenicist aims, and included a poem in praise of Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Erasmus, Luther, Melancthon, Duifhuis, and Cassander.

<sup>138</sup> Wessels, *Bron, waarheid en de verandering der tijden*, 211–226.

and Holtius).<sup>139</sup> In short, Calvinist versions of the communal past<sup>140</sup> were pitted against Arminian ones. A particularly notorious exemplar of the latter variety was the *History of the Remonstrants* (1774), begun by the enigmatic Jacobus Regenboog (1702–1775) and completed by Van der Meersch.<sup>141</sup> It was in turn countered by a *Short history of the national synod held at Dordrecht* (1776), by ‘the solicitor for the church of the Fatherland’, evidently a colleague of the orthodox *Advocate*.<sup>142</sup> If he were to write a history of the Arminian troubles, said another essayist, he would show that it was nothing short of a miracle that Calvinism triumphed over the devious snares of so-called ‘Tolerants’, who sought to suppress the truth by unashamedly appealing to secular power.<sup>143</sup> The spate of commemorations in the 1770s, with the celebration of various bicentennials relating to the Revolt, provided additional material for anticlerical Tolerants to show in poetry or prose that the Calvinists themselves had gained their position through unscrupulous power play and reprehensible intolerance.<sup>144</sup> Never at a loss for an answer, the orthodox retorted as late as 1786 with a reprint of a passionate account of the early seventeenth-century troubles by the Counter-Remonstrant burgomaster Frederik de Vrij (1579–1646).<sup>145</sup>

<sup>139</sup> A.A. van der Meersch [as Theophilus Philadelphus], *De onschuld der Remonstranten* [*The innocence of the Remonstrants*] (1754); a learned account, larded with classical citations and comments on toleration. See also Tideman, ‘De Remonstrantsche Broederschap verdedigd’.

<sup>140</sup> Such as the anonymous *Beknopte geschiedenis of verhaal van 't voorgevallene, tusschen de remonstranten en contra-remonstranten* [*Brief history or account of the events concerning the Remonstrants and Counter-Remonstrants*], Amsterdam 1773; it discussed the period between 1618 and 1772.

<sup>141</sup> [J. Regenboog], *Historie der Remonstranten* (. . .) (1774–1776); translated into German by H.M. Cramer, a minister at Quedlinburg. It is not certain who Regenboog was.

<sup>142</sup> [Anon.], *Korte historie van de synode nationaal gehouden binnen Dordrecht* (1776); on the *Advocate*, see section 3.1 above.

<sup>143</sup> *NB* 1775-i, 73–79. *NB* 1778-ii published a series of 9 essays containing documents pertaining to the invitation of the Swiss cantons to participate at the Synod of Dort.

<sup>144</sup> E.g. [Anon.], *De hervorming van Amsterdam* [*The reformation of Amsterdam*] (1778); ‘Arnobius Philomusus, Goesanus’, *'t Juichend Amsterdam* [*Jubilant Amsterdam*] (1778).

<sup>145</sup> F. de Vrij, *Historie of kort en waarachtig verhaal van den oorsprong en voortgang der kerkelyke beroerten in Holland* [*History or concise and true account of the origins and progress of the ecclesiastical troubles in Holland*] (1786); this edition contains a foreword by ‘E.V.P.’, who has been identified as the orthodox preacher J.J. Brahé; see Haitzma Mulier and Van der Lem, *Repertorium van geschiedschrijvers in Nederland*, 433; *De Recensent* I (1787), 57–64.

In spite of these confessional counter-histories, accounts of the controversy over Arminianism ultimately brought home the message that the past was first and foremost communal, or national, and that conflicts over religion were, to say the least, regrettably unpatriotic. By the 1760s, as the debates over subscription and national history indicate, a polite public of free debate had begun to supersede the Old Regime's authoritarian public sphere. We shall discuss the polite public more fully in later chapters; first we must discuss the Mennonite contribution to the Dutch toleration debate.

#### 4.4 ANABAPTISM ASSIMILATED

Dutch Remonstrants had produced Philip van Limborch as a middle-of-the-road latitudinarian. What about Dutch Mennonites? The latter were in a curious position. Some of them were very rich, and they had shown themselves to be loyal citizens during the seventeenth century, by financing in part the Dutch war effort. On the other hand, ever since the bizarre events at Münster in 1534, Calvinist and Lutheran (not to speak of Catholic) theologians had unanimously portrayed Mennonites as a bunch of dangerous fanatics who could not possibly be loyal to the state since they rejected oaths and arms, and were in any case open to all kinds of heresies. The authoritative and influential Spanheims had written grand refutations of what in the seventeenth-century was still referred to as 'Anabaptism'.<sup>146</sup> To associate law-abiding Dutch Mennonites with such outrageous religious eccentrics as Melchior Hoffmann, Jakob Hutter, Kaspar Schwenckfeld, David Joris, Michael Servet, Paracelsus and Valentin Weigel was still common enough among eighteenth-century defenders of the confessional public sphere. As we shall see in this section, Reformed attitudes towards Mennonites changed dramatically in the course of the century. Some Mennonites were increasingly associated with mainstream Arminianism, which in turn was increasingly regarded as libertarian and radical rather than merely heterodox; other Mennonites, such as the pastor Herman Schijn, were seen as orthodox comrades in the on-going battle against freedom of thought.

Suspicious concerning the orthodoxy of Dutch Mennonites were

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<sup>146</sup> Cf. Heyd, 'The reaction to enthusiasm', 275–276, n. 75.

not lessened with the development of seventeenth-century Collegiantism.<sup>147</sup> Following the Synod of Dort, critics of the new religious establishment had begun to organize meetings. Between 1621 and 1787 Collegiantism was centred on the 'college' at Rijnsburg, where adherents to the movement met twice a year to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Collegiant meetings were open to all who professed Christ. The Collegiants had no organized or ordained clergy, baptized by submersion, and gave free admission to communion. If Collegiants were not the only ones to pursue the ideal of a universal church, they were surely the most consistent in putting their ideas into practice. Collegiant writings entered into the Dutch toleration debate during the later seventeenth century. Characteristic of this spiritualist tradition were writings by the Amsterdam burgomaster Coenraad van Beuningen (1622–1693), intended 'to unite all Christians, and all people, through a restoration of the Eternal Gospel without human interpretation' (1689).<sup>148</sup> One eighteenth-century statement of Collegiant principles was *The true image of a Collegiant* (1735) by Eppo Botterman. Collegiants did not pursue institutional and doctrinal syncretism, Botterman assured his readers, but believed that true Christians from all denominations, together constituting the universal church, should practise the community of the saints.<sup>149</sup> Such spiritualist irenicism gradually petered out, one of the final testimonies being Jacob van Roojestein's *Treatise on Christian concord* (1746).<sup>150</sup>

In practice, many Collegiants were members of the Mennonite community; the well-known Collegiant orphanage at Amsterdam, *De Oranje Appel* (*The Orange*), was closely connected with the Mennonite community. Here orphans were raised on the hymns of seventeenth-century dissenting poets like Joachim Oudaan (1628–1692) and Dirk Raphaëlsz Camphuysen (1586–1627)<sup>151</sup> and generally received a strict religious education. Mostly destined to a life of domestic service, they

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<sup>147</sup> Van Slee, *De Rijnsburger collegianten*; Kolakowski, 'Dutch seventeenth-century anticonfessional ideas'; Fix, *Prophecy and reason*.

<sup>148</sup> C. van Beuningen, *Alle de brieven ende schriften* (1689).

<sup>149</sup> E. Botterman, *Het ware afbeeldsel van een collegiant* [1735], 29–39. Botterman was opposed by the orthodox Mennonite Rijdsdijk (see below) as well as the orthodox Calvinist Antonius Driessen. In his *Het ware afbeeldsel van een collegiant* (1735), the latter defined the Collegiant (74) as 'a double-tongued man, inconstant in his ways, and a patron of Socinians.'

<sup>150</sup> J. van Roojestein, *Verhandeling over de Christelyke eenigheid* (1746); I have not been able to consult the book.

<sup>151</sup> Melles, *Joachim Oudaan*; Van den Doel, *Daar moet veel strijds gestreden zijn*.

were trained also to value freedom of thought. When orphans came of age and were ready to set out in the world, they were given the following exhortation: 'Apply and accustom yourselves to listening to (pious and moderate) Sermons, and to attending Religious Meetings where there is freedom to question and to speak. And when you have arrived at a mature judgement, make certain to join a tolerant and indulgent Congregation, where sincere virtue and holiness of life are highly commended, and attempts are made with prudent zeal to rebuild the universal Christian Church.' The various denominations were so many 'particular families and households belonging to the Republic of universal Christendom.'<sup>152</sup> In the eighteenth century, *De Oranje Appel* was widely regarded as a den of Unitarians. Collegiants, observed Zinzendorf in his diary, were Socinians, 'wie man es hier nennet'.<sup>153</sup> In fact, the Collegiants tended more and more to adhere to mainstream Mennonite and Remonstrant views, while often describing themselves as 'Unitarian' to show that they also rejected orthodox Trinitarianism.<sup>154</sup> Collegiantism itself began to decline sharply after about 1770. The last eighteenth-century Collegiant of substantial repute was the historian Jan Wagenaar, brought up as a Calvinist but baptized into the 'Universal Church' in 1730.<sup>155</sup> Traditional Socinianism gradually dwindled as well. The last Socinian theologian of some renown, Samuel Crell (1660–1747), illustrates this.<sup>156</sup> Educated at the Amsterdam Remonstrant Seminary, Crell left for Germany at the age of twenty. He studied intensively and travelled widely, but spent the last two decades of his life in Holland. In most respects a Socinian, Crell's view on the doctrine of satisfaction was wholly Remonstrant.

By the time Collegiantism had virtually disappeared from the religious scene, members of the Rotterdam 'college' published a final collection of sermons. The definition of Collegiantism provided by the editor shows that, in terms of the debate on freedom and toleration, the movement had practically become superfluous. There was little that still distinguished Collegiants from other critics of the public church. Collegiants, claimed the editor in his foreword, are

<sup>152</sup> Quoted in Buijsters, *Wolff & Deken*, 163.

<sup>153</sup> Zinzendorf, 'Das Diarium', 83.

<sup>154</sup> Kühler, *Het socinianisme in Nederland*, 261.

<sup>155</sup> Wessels, *Bron, waarheid en de verandering der tijden*, 420–421.

<sup>156</sup> For the following, see Kühler, *Het socinianisme in Nederland*, 256–257.

Christians whose only confession is the Bible. As Protestants, they hold the Word of God to be the only rule of faith and morality, and they try to put this statement into practice by exercising 'general Christian Forbearance', accepting as brothers and sisters all who believe the Gospel and recognize the divine nature of Holy Scripture. The main distinguishing mark of the Collegiants is their liberty to speak at religious meetings. Everyone, irrespective of his denomination, has the freedom to express his religious sentiments; all that is required is sufficient ability, modesty, good intentions, and irreproachable behaviour.<sup>157</sup> One of the sermons in the first volume, discussing the Collegiant principles of individual inquiry and mutual forbearance, contained little that distinguished it as a Collegiant address. Public opinion had overtaken Collegiantism; by the 1780s, its assimilation into a broad, respectable discourse of politeness had rendered it obsolete.

The Mennonites similarly made progress in terms of social and intellectual propriety. Like the Collegiants proper, Mennonites were frequently accused of Socinianism. Gerard de Wind (1685–1752), a learned Mennonite preacher and physician, was still charged with Socinianism (having opposed Joan van den Honert's *De gratia Dei*) in the 1730s, as was Johannes Stinstra in the 1740s.<sup>158</sup> A telling sign of increasing socio-religious conformity and acceptance is the rapprochement between Arminians and Mennonites. The two groups had made a bid for each other at Rotterdam around 1670, but the unionist attempt failed. Union with the Mennonites was never the Arminians' main priority. The latter were intent on being assimilated into the public church, not on being associated with a highly divisive and sectarian minority with relatively few institutional traditions. It is significant that the only successful attempt at uniting Remonstrants and Mennonites in one congregation occurred in 1798 at Dokkum in Friesland, and only because the administrators of both congregations had a shared Collegiant background.<sup>159</sup> The Mennonites,

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<sup>157</sup> *Leerredenen, uitgesproken in de Christelyke vergadering der collegianten te Rotterdam* [Sermons (. . .)] (1780–1781), I, I–II.

<sup>158</sup> G. de Wind, *Verhandeling van Gods algemeene genade* [Treatise on God's universal grace] (1728); G. van Hemert, *Gerard de Wind (. . .) ontmaskert* (1730); Gerard van Hemert (1698–1759), a Reformed minister, pointed out that De Wind's views were at odds with those of 'pure' Mennonites.

<sup>159</sup> Cossee, 'Doopsgezinden en Remonstranten in de achttiende eeuw', 69–70; Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 309–314.

moreover, were dependent on the Remonstrants, rather than vice versa. In the first half of the century, some Mennonite theology students received their education at the Remonstrant Seminary, where they listened to Van Limborch and Le Clerc. The Arminian professor Adriaan van Cattenburgh (1664–1743) even attempted to cure some Mennonites from their Socinianism. Apparently he was successful, for by the middle of the century it was said that Mennonites were simply Arminians who favoured adult baptism (conversely, a large number of Remonstrants were said to object to paedobaptism).<sup>160</sup> Mennonite congregations started to call Arminian student-preachers to the ministry, at least when the civil authorities permitted them to do so. Before he began his career as a minister of the Remonstrant Brotherhood in 1711, Drieberge had preached to Mennonite congregations, including Harlingen, the home town of Johannes Stinstra.<sup>161</sup> The Remonstrant Brotherhood objected to this habit in the 1720s, since they were experiencing a shortage of pastors themselves. The upshot was that the Mennonites established their own school at Amsterdam in 1735,<sup>162</sup> when, significantly, the first professor of the academy had to be enticed by means of a substantial salary not to become a Remonstrant. Mennonites did continue to attend the Remonstrant Seminary, where teachers like Van Cattenburgh, Drieberge and Wettstein ensured a higher intellectual standard than anything the Mennonites could achieve.

By the 1730s, the Mennonites had begun to reaffirm their own doctrinal identity (basically their position on baptism and oaths) over and against the Remonstrants. Jan Wagenaar used his considerable talents to refute the criticism of the Arminian Koenraad Bremer († 1766), by writing a mild defence of adult baptism.<sup>163</sup> There was also some discussion on re-baptizing believers; the orthodox view seems to have been that believers who entered a Mennonite con-

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<sup>160</sup> Blaupot ten Cate, *Holland*, 28, quoting Koenraad Bremer in 1747. The articles to which Stinstra was asked to subscribe when he was called to Amsterdam had a Remonstrant tenor; see Kühler, *Het socinianisme in Nederland*, 259–260.

<sup>161</sup> Tideman, *De Remonstrantsche Broederschap*, 434–436; the Harlingen congregation had expressly requested Drieberge.

<sup>162</sup> Brüsewitz, “Tot de aankweek van leeraren”.

<sup>163</sup> [Jan Wagenaar], *Onderzoek over de oudheid en schriftmaatigheid van den kinderdoop* [*Inquiry into the antiquity and scriptural character of child baptism*] (1740); Wessels, *Bron, waarheid en de verandering der tijden*, 423–425. Eighteenth-century translations of English writings include books by John Gale, Stephen Addington, and Samuel Stennett.



gregation need not undergo a second baptism.<sup>164</sup> In fact, during most of the early modern period changeovers to the Mennonite denomination were not encouraged, for a variety of reasons. The idea was prevalent that there were true believers in all churches; also, Mennonite leaders were anxious not to antagonize the public church through proselytism, while they rejected anything even remotely resembling Münsterite sectarianism. One of the few exceptions to the rule was Anthonie van der Os, the deposed Reformed minister whose cause had been pleaded by Schultens. To the dismay of his Calvinist supporters he defected to the Mennonites. Adding insult to injury, he was re-baptized in 1758 by Cornelis Loosjes, the only Mennonite spiritual leader willing to perform the ceremony and risk the displeasure of his colleagues.

Dutch Baptists were a hopelessly divided denomination.<sup>165</sup> One of the two main groups was the 'Lamist' congregation, originating in the activities of the physician-theologian Galenus Abrahamsz ('de Haan'; 1622–1706), probably the most important Mennonite leader of the later seventeenth century.<sup>166</sup> The Lamists derived their name from one of the hideaway churches in Amsterdam at which they convened, called 't *Lam*. Similarly, the more orthodox and traditional Mennonites were called the 'Zonists' because they met at *De Zon* in Amsterdam. The Lamists were sometimes associated with Socinianism, while the Zonists tended to be more conservative, to the extent that they even supported the use of confessions. The rule, however, was not watertight. Stinstra had refused an invitation to settle as a preacher at the Lamist congregation in Amsterdam because he was required to sign 17 articles with a Trinitarian bias; he was adamantly opposed to the 'yoke of Mennonite orthodoxy'.<sup>167</sup>

The emphasis on orthodox Trinitarianism and formalized doctrinal statements regarding adult baptism was more than just an attempt to organize Mennonite congregations in an orderly and disciplined fashion, in the face of Collegiant informality. It was also an attempt to justify the public status of the Mennonites as a tolerated sect. Van den Honert, affirming the Reformed principles on toleration in 1745,

<sup>164</sup> Cramer, 'Hoe onze vaderen (...) hebben gedacht'.

<sup>165</sup> The discord and attempts at concord are discussed in Oosterbaan, 'Vlekken en rimpels'.

<sup>166</sup> Meihuizen, *Galenus Abrahamsz*.

<sup>167</sup> Cf. Sepp, *Stinstra*, I, 204–206.

had not emphasized the confessionalization of Mennonites without good reason. He was an ardent supporter of Mennonite self-discipline. In 1742 he even re-issued Lambert Bidloo's *Unlimited forbearance [as leading to] the destruction of Baptists*, in collaboration with the author's son. To this orthodox Mennonite tract opposing Collegiant practices and pleas for 'unlimited forbearance', Van den Honert appended a lengthy account concerning Mennonite and Remonstrant confessions.<sup>168</sup> Similarly, the 'serious' Cocceian Ravesteyn praised the *Defence of the orthodoxy of true Mennonites* by another orthodox Baptist, Jacob Rijdsdijk († 1744).<sup>169</sup> As late as 1773 the Mennonite preacher Joannes Cuperus (1725–1777) deemed it necessary to underline the duty of Christians in general, and Mennonites in particular, to attend *public* services, dedicating his sermon to the burgomasters of Utrecht.<sup>170</sup> In effect, his sermon was an attempt to ensure the Mennonites' rightful share in Dutch society.

The greatest apologist for Dutch Baptism as a legal sect was, however, the Mennonite leader Herman Schijn (1662–1727). He authored a two-volume *Historia Mennonitarum* (1723–1729), intended to show that there was no reason why Mennonites should not be given legal status as an orthodox denomination.<sup>171</sup> It demonstrated that Dutch Mennonites were quite distinct from the Münster Anabaptists, and that they upheld fundamental articles (including the Trinity) just as any other respectable Protestant community. Within the confines of the confessional public sphere, then, the pursuit of respectability was equivalent to a defence of orthodox confessionalism. Herman Schijn was also a staunch supporter of inter-Mennonite ecumenism, in view of which he wrote his *Plan to unite the Baptist Christians* in 1723.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>168</sup> L. Bidloo, *Onbepaalde verdraagsaamheid de verwoesting der doopsgezinden* (. . .), Leiden 1742; originally published in 1701. Bidloo suggested (58–59) that the Mennonite Collegiants be called 'Independents', since like their English counterparts they recognized no synodal authority; see also Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 97. Bidloo was countered by Dirk van Avenhorn, *De onderlinge Christelyke verdraagsaamheid, gezocht in de Christelyke kerke, maar niet gevonden* [*Mutual Christian forbearance, looked for in the Christian church but not found*] (1743); Van Avenhorn argued that formularies were only useful when applied very loosely.

<sup>169</sup> *Verdediging van de regtzinnigheid der ware Mennoniten* (1729).

<sup>170</sup> J. Cuperus, *Kerkrede, waar in de vraag, zyn wy volstrekt verpligt tot den openbaren godsdienst* (. . .)? [*Sermon on the question, are we absolutely obliged to worship in public?*] (1773).

<sup>171</sup> D.tr. H. Schijn, *Geschiedenis der protestantsche Christenen in 't Vereenigd Nederland genaamd Mennoniten* (1738), tr. by M. van Maurik. Schijn also opposed anticlerical mystics; Wartena, 'Een strijd over mystiek.'

<sup>172</sup> H. Schijn, *Ontwerp tot vereeniging der doopsgezinde Christenen* (1723, 1738).

Using John 13:34 and other texts on Christian charity, Schijn suggested that laymen and preachers pursue unity of spirit and oppose dissension. He praised the recent unionist attempts between Lutherans and Calvinists, hoping that they would soon bear fruit. Nonetheless, he considered the prospect of unifying the whole of Christendom a daunting one; he thought it best to make the attempt in stages, and to begin at home. Schijn claimed that the Mennonites—the Waterland, Flemish, Frisian, German, Swiss, and all the other groups—agreed on fundamental points. If *they* could not achieve church union, nothing short of a miracle would be able to restore concord to Christianity as a whole. Significantly, Schijn (who was invariably mentioned with respect by Van den Honert Jr.) added that union had to be achieved by means of a proper confession, rather than an unlimited forbearance tending towards indifference.

In his treatise, Schijn examined various obstacles to the Mennonite reunion he envisaged. Such obstacles included the *pedilavium* (the washing of feet), the practice of silent prayer during public services, the ban and shunning, and the invitation of unbaptized believers to the Lord's Supper. These obstacles were not insurmountable, as long as they were properly (that is, confessionally) understood. Not surprisingly, Schijn resolutely disposed of the Collegiant practice of inviting to communion every Tom, Dik and Hendrik who acknowledged Jesus.<sup>173</sup> In any case, it was clear from the Mennonite confessions that they agreed on fundamentals.<sup>174</sup> Schijn went on to discuss the various means by which union could be attained. It was understood that the pursuit of charity and concord had to be heartfelt and guided by indulgence. On a more practical level, Schijn's recommendations were based on the view that church organizations needed confessional discipline. He suggested that six or eight of the most pious, sensible and peaceable ministers should review the Mennonite confessions and write up a new one, which should then be put before a special meeting of the whole Baptist community.

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<sup>173</sup> Earlier, Schijn had argued the point in his *Onderzoek op de Rynsburgse verdraagzaamheid* [*Examination of Rijnburger forbearance*] (1703). Opposing the Collegiant Cornelis Hoek († 1722), he claimed that Collegiant practices were at variance with Reformation principles, and that their plea for complete liberty would lead to chaos.

<sup>174</sup> Schijn, *Ontwerp tot vereeniging*, 85–89, discusses several criteria for defining fundamental articles, probably derived from Limborch's *Theologia Christiana* (chapters XXI–XXIII of book VIII); for an outline of the latter, see Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 26–31.

Schijn was the most authoritative unionist of the eighteenth century, but his attempts bore fruit only at the very end of the century. Discussions then resulted in the *Vereenigde Doopsgezinde Gemeente* (*United Mennonite Congregation*), established on 22 April 1801 at Amsterdam. It was a union of Lamists and Zonists, the only two (out of originally eleven) Mennonite denominations then remaining in the city.<sup>175</sup> Among the later writers, the Zonist and erstwhile Patriot Arend Hendrik van Gelder (1756–1819), deserves mention. A warm advocate of both reunion and popular enlightenment, he emphasized ‘Christianity over religious difference’. He was also a member of the Society for the Good of the Public, a fact illustrating the Mennonites’ assimilation into polite society. The Mennonite pastor Klaas van der Horst (1731–1825) provided a number of rules (universally applicable, as a reviewer commented) to preserve charity and concord among the recently reunited congregations at Haarlem.<sup>176</sup> With obvious satisfaction, the same periodical (which itself had Mennonite leanings) published a ‘Contribution to the history of forbearance in our nation’. It recounted that when a particular Reformed church in Friesland was rebuilt between 1776 and 1778, the congregation was kindly allowed to make use of the local Mennonite church; for which act of charity the Mennonites were solemnly presented six silver beakers.<sup>177</sup>

As the century progressed, the orthodox Calvinist clergy began to agree that fundamental articles offered a real basis for dialogue even with a sect as disreputable as the erstwhile Anabaptists. When several Mennonites sought rapprochement to the Reformed during the 1770s, they were rejected—but courteously, and in the spirit of brotherhood. Jan Beets (1708–1788) was a characteristic example of these right-wing Mennonites, who had pietist inclinations, and sometimes joined the Reformed Church. Beets had been captivated by Zinzendorf in his youth and after 1738 developed a friendship with the German pietist Gerhard Tersteegen. During the Dutch Awakenings around the middle of the century, he preached in a Frisian barn to more than a thousand souls, which, as Tersteegen reported, resulted in a

<sup>175</sup> For the following, see Cramer, ‘De vereeniging der twee Amsterdamsche gemeenten in 1801’.

<sup>176</sup> K. van der Horst, *Leerreden, ter aanprijzing van eensgezindheid en liefde in de gemeente, over Hand. IV. 32* [Sermon on Acts 4:32, to commend concord and charity in the congregation] (1784); VL 1785-i, 14–16.

<sup>177</sup> VL 1794-ii, 88–90.

vociferous ‘winseln, jammern und weinen über sünden’. Beets was fined 50 guilders by the authorities for causing disturbances.<sup>178</sup> He later became a minister at Hoorn in Holland, one of the bastions of Mennonite conservatism. True to his pietist sympathies, he called upon ‘all true spiritual Zionites’ within and without the Republic to unite, in a book titled *One flock and one shepherd; or the temple of the Lord* (1776).<sup>179</sup> Beets did not halt at a spiritual communion of pious believers, but argued that they should form one church. Interestingly, even an orthodox periodical observed that the ‘moderate Reformed’ would have welcomed any ‘fraternal’ communion among the members of different confessions, but that full church union was taking things a bit too far. In many particulars—on universal and particular grace, for instance—there was enough dissension to prevent union, the reviewer continued, citing one of Bonnet’s writings on ecclesiastical toleration. Nevertheless, he went on to praise ‘God’s free and independent Grace’ for contriving a spiritual bond between Calvinists on the one hand and Dutch Mennonites and English Baptists on the other, and he concluded with the hope that one day the pious within the various denominations would unite.<sup>180</sup>

As a pietist, Jan Beets was not particularly interested in confessions and discipline. He himself had, in fact, refused to subscribe when he came to Hoorn, and called himself a ‘servant of the Gospel’ and a ‘general Servant of the Holy Universal Christian Church’. By contrast, his colleague Cornelis Ris († 1781) called himself a ‘Mennonite minister’ or *leraar*, advertising himself as a confessional divine. Ris developed a reputation as the most Calvinist among the Mennonites. Earlier in the century, he and his wife Dina Beets had corresponded with Tersteegen in the 1730s on ‘the way of the heart’ as more reasonable than the way of reason.<sup>181</sup> In 1776, he published a short account of his attempts to unify the Mennonites, to which he appended a proposal for a new confession, with annotations by himself and Pieter Beets on freedom and grace.<sup>182</sup> To the surprise of the Calvinist

<sup>178</sup> Van Andel, *Gerhard Tersteegen*, 71–72.

<sup>179</sup> J. Beets, *Eene kudde en een herder; ofte de tempel des Heeren* (1776).

<sup>180</sup> *NB* 1777-i, 156–166.

<sup>181</sup> Van Andel ed., *Gerhard Tersteegen. Briefe*, 56–58, 122–126.

<sup>182</sup> C. Ris, *Kort begrip van 't voorgevallene over de geloofs-leer der waare Mennoniten* [*Brief synopsis of events relating to the doctrine of true Mennonites*] (1776). The Reformed clergy valued Pieter Beets, a pastor among the Hamburg Mennonites, with whose theological views on man’s impotence and corruption any ‘true Calvinist’ was able to agree; *NB* 1777-i, 343–349.

clergy, Ris claimed that he was able to reconcile the various views on universal and particular grace, so that there could be no obstruction to a rapprochement between Calvinists and Mennonites. The Reformed clergy had much respect for Ris' *irenicum* (as they called it), but despite his appeal to Calvinist authorities, they disagreed with his views on sin and predestination.<sup>183</sup>

There were Mennonites enough who distrusted this orthodox ecumenism. A well-known Mennonite pastor at Utrecht, Cornelis de Vries (1740–1812), in 1773 held a sermon on John 4:9 ('for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans'), causing such a commotion in his congregation that he felt obliged to publish it. It duly appeared under the circuitous title, *The tolerant views of the Mennonites as not incompatible with their continuing isolation from the rest of Christendom*.<sup>184</sup> De Vries pointed out that religious differences had always been the cause of dissension and hatred, between Jews and Samaritans, Greeks and Barbarians, Romans and Christians, and among Christians themselves. The Reformation actually fostered these differences because of the principles of free inquiry and freedom of worship for which it stood. Although there are Protestants who still do not practise as much moderation and forbearance as they should, there is more mutual charity and concord among the various denominations now than ever before. Especially in the United Provinces, which have always been a haven of refuge for the persecuted, citizens maintain cordial relations with each other. Many have begun to think and speak moderately, and many more would do so if they were not hampered by narrow restrictions devised in the past. The Mennonites in particular excel in the practice of forbearance and obligingness, since they reject man-made confessions, accept only the Bible as the rule of faith and morality, respect the various ways in which people see fit to interpret the Bible, and regard everyone as a brother who believes in Jesus as the Saviour of the world. Why then must Mennonites continue as a distinct sect? De Vries, who sympathized with Collegiantism, provided four reasons. First, the Mennonites maintain views and practices peculiar to themselves. These views and practices are not binding, but do obstruct a union with other churches.

<sup>183</sup> NB 1777-i, 136–156.

<sup>184</sup> C. de Vries, *De verdraagzame begrippen der doopsgezinden* (1773); on the title page there is an epigram by Werenfels, to the effect that it is impossible to have everyone believe the same thing. For a critical review, see NB 1774/II-i, 29–46.

Secondly, it would be more reasonable for individuals to leave the denominations in which they no longer feel at home and join the Mennonites. Thirdly, the isolation of the Mennonites does not signal estrangement; it is only an apparent segregation. If Christians had not invented their own rules in addition to the literal commandments of the Gospel, if they invite everyone to partake of the Lord's Table as the Mennonites do, Christendom would no longer be divided. Fourthly, a large-scale union may well be neither possible nor useful. Man being what he is, the existence of so many different religious views within one church would probably lead to dispute upon dispute, so that the present state of affairs is much to be preferred.

De Vries was clearly anxious to prevent the tendency among his orthodox brethren to write up confessions and seek rapprochement with the Reformed. Others, too, believed it wiser to resign themselves to the divisions within Christendom, in the hope and the expectation that if things ran their course the result would be nationwide concord. The Mennonite Allard Hulshoff (1734–1795), for example, was strongly opposed to ecclesiastical comprehension, and at the same time a powerful advocate for what he called a 'perfect tolerant civil state'.<sup>185</sup> The debate on paedobaptism also reflects the conflict between orthodox and heterodox Mennonites.<sup>186</sup> English discussions were closely followed in the Netherlands, as testified by the translation of *An apology for the Baptists* by Abraham Booth (1734–1806). The book was regarded as a repudiation of those Baptists who found adult baptism and paedobaptism equally satisfactory, mainly because they wished to grant open access to the Lord's Table.<sup>187</sup> Booth was valued as an apologist for Mennonite orthodoxy (and he was avidly read by some orthodox Calvinists). Another right-wing Mennonite, Johannes A. Hoekstra (1763–1817), who ministered to the congregations at Hamburg and Altona, regretted the progress of heterodoxy among Mennonites and wished that the revival of orthodoxy

<sup>185</sup> MS Leiden BPL 1160, letter by Allard Hulshoff, dd. 10–11–1776.

<sup>186</sup> Cf. also *Twee samenspraken, tusschen een zogenaamden gereformeerden predikant, en een orthodoxen of regtsinnigen belyder* [*Two dialogues between a so-called Reformed minister and an orthodox believer*] (s.a.); the Reformed minister loses the debate.

<sup>187</sup> A. Booth, *De doopsgezinden verdedigd* (1779). Cf. NB 1779-i, 344–347, where reference is made to pamphlets by the 'General Baptist' Dan Taylor (1738–1816) and Daniel Turner on the communion between baptists and non-baptists; the reviewer remarks that Booth was not happy with the Dutch translation of his book.

would be as strong in the Netherlands as in England.<sup>188</sup> By the 1790s, the old Calvinist-Mennonite distinctions were dissolving in a common evangelical piety.<sup>189</sup>

#### 4.5 THE ROMAN CHURCH, OR THE LIMITS OF CIVILIZATION

One group of Dutch dissenters remains to be discussed: the Roman Catholics. The history of Dutch Roman Catholicism in the eighteenth century begins, inauspiciously, with a schism. Among the secular clergy (who were traditionally opposed to the regular clergy, notably the Jesuits), French Jansenist theology exerted certain influence. The interest in a spiritual movement emphasizing grace and predestination led to a rupture with the mother church early in the eighteenth century, when the archbishop of Utrecht, Petrus Codde (1648–1710), accused of sympathizing with Jansenism, was suspended and then dismissed. Many among the Dutch clergy and laity remained loyal to Codde, initiating the development of a Jansenist Catholic church. However, most Dutch Jansenists would not have regarded their own church as an organization separate from the Roman Catholic—there were attempts at reconciliation throughout the century.<sup>190</sup> In its outward diplomacy, the civil authorities did not take sides (although they did prefer homegrown Jansenists, who were easier to control). Responding to Roman requests to take action against the rebels, the States General emphasized in 1725 that Jansenism was a matter of individual conscience and one that would have to be resolved within the Catholic Church itself. Catholics were to be tolerated and safeguarded from persecution, whether heretic or ultramontane.<sup>191</sup>

If Calvinist magistrates acknowledged Jansenist rebels, they did so partly because the latter recognized that any clergyman appointed as a spiritual leader of Dutch Catholics had to be approved of by the civil authorities. This was an important issue in the early eighteenth

<sup>188</sup> J.A.S. Hoekstra, *Twee leerredenen* [*Two sermons*], Utrecht 1793; VB 1794, 12–15

<sup>189</sup> See section 7.5.

<sup>190</sup> De Vries, *Vredes-pogingen*. There was some debate on the question whether there was, in fact, a schism. Cf. Filips Verhulst [as Ph. Vlaming], *De drie hoofdgescillen tusschen de rooms-catholyken* [*The three main differences among Catholics*] (1741), III, 1223–1224; the book singled out the condemnation of Jansenius, the bull *Unigenitus* of 1713, and the problems concerning the archbishopric of Utrecht.

<sup>191</sup> Polman, *Katholiek Nederland in de achttiende eeuw*, I, 294–295.



century. Religious denominations were being domesticated, in the sense that they were judged according to their confessional status, and consequently tolerated or not tolerated.<sup>192</sup> Influential Calvinist divines like Joan van den Honert laid down the rules of the toleration game. Orthodox Mennonites wished their own denomination to subscribe to Trinitarian doctrine. Lutherans delineated their confessional position, as is testified by the *Concordia* of 1715, containing the 'Christian, habitual and harmonious confession of the doctrine and faith of the (. . .) electors, princes and estates of the Augsburg Confession, and of its theologians.'<sup>193</sup> During the first half of the eighteenth century, a measure of religious freedom was likewise tentatively extended to the Roman Catholic Church. The admission of priests into the Republic was formally regulated, lists of pastors were issued annually after 1736, and still later in the century Papal proclamations of Holy Years were allowed to be published. Van den Honert Jr. held an elaborate debate with a Jansenist priest on the doctrine of transubstantiation, beginning in 1739 and lasting more than a decade. Theo Clemens has advanced the thesis that Van den Honert's explicit refutation of Catholic doctrine as expounded by Bellarmine appears a consequence of Catholics intruding into the public domain as a clearly defined and increasingly tolerated group.<sup>194</sup> Van den Honert was attempting to preserve the confessional public sphere, which was strictly speaking Calvinist and broadly speaking Protestant and Trinitarian, but never Roman Catholic or Socinian.<sup>195</sup>

No love was lost between Reformed orthodoxy and the Roman Catholics, at least not at the institutional level. Unionist debates such as those held in Germany between Lutherans and Catholics—the famous discussions between Leibniz and Bossuet, for example—were out of the question in an oligarchic Protestant Republic.<sup>196</sup> Marriages

<sup>192</sup> See section 4.4.

<sup>193</sup> Z. Dezius, *Concordia* (1715), dedication. The Lutheran divine Zacharias Dezius (1678–1725) had problems in getting the book published, but the reason is not clear; he had pietist sympathies and was not on good terms with the powerful Amsterdam consistory. Cf. also *Kort samenstel der kristelyke leere naar de (. . .) onveranderde Augsburgse Geloofsbelydenis* [*Brief compilation of Christian teaching according to the unchanged Augsburg confession*] (1764, 1779).

<sup>194</sup> Clemens, 'Op zoek naar nieuwe grenzen'.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. by contrast the later impartial account of the tolerated denominations in the Republic by the Reformed minister Samuel van Emdre (1746–1816): *Historisch berigt van alle de gezindheden* (1784).

<sup>196</sup> The unionist attempts by 'Febronius' only received indirect coverage in the

between Catholics and Reformed were discouraged by the government until the end of the century, after stricter laws to this effect had been introduced in the 1740s and 1750s.<sup>197</sup> For many, Roman Catholicism remained unadulterated anti-Christendom. Anti-Papist satires, sermons, histories and dogmatic expositions still appeared in relative abundance.<sup>198</sup> By the 1770s, the *Advocate* of the public church was able to observe that Catholics had become modest and polite, so that Reformed pulpits no longer thundered with 'the whore of Babel, the many-headed beast and the locusts from the bottomless pit.'<sup>199</sup> But at least until the 1740s, with the Catholic French once again knocking on the Republic's door, anti-Catholic sentiment was common. Conversely, a strong sense of Catholic identity had developed over the years in the lower social strata. Early in the century, Dutch Catholics still believed that the Church would eventually come into its own, at the expense of Protestants, through a re-appropriation of church buildings and ultimately the establishment of a Catholic state.<sup>200</sup> Such prophecies caused an anti-Papist panic as late as 1734, when rumours surfaced that the Catholics had hidden large quantities of gunpowder and would take revenge on their Protestant countrymen with the help of the French.<sup>201</sup> But it seems significant that the magistrates, the intellectuals and the priests denounced the disturbances, if only because they desired to preserve the delicate status quo between the numerous Catholics and the public church.

The gradual domestication of the Roman Catholic Church was reflected in contemporary journals. In conscious opposition to John

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Republic. Cf. *VL* 1776-i, 107–112, with a review of a volume of Ch.W.F. Walch's church history in which the Febronian movement was discussed. On Febronius, see Pitzer, *Justinus Febronius*.

<sup>197</sup> Clemens, 'Op zoek naar nieuwe grenzen', 75. Legal measures were disputed by [Anon.], *Vertoog over de vrijheid die men heeft, om zig in den echt te begeeven met iemand; wiens begrippen in den Christelijken godsdienst met de onze verschillen* [Discourse on the liberty to marry someone whose views on the Christian religion differ from our own] [c. 1775]. An anti-Jesuit tract translated from the French argued that the legalization of inter-confessional marriage was a good means to get the French Huguenots back into the Catholic church; *Samenspraak tusschen een bisschop van de vergadering der geestelijkheid, en een priester van Parijs* [Dialogue between a conciliar bishop and a priest from Paris] (1776).

<sup>198</sup> Polman, *Katholiek Nederland in de achttiende eeuw*, II, 99–101. Jacob Campo Weyerman, an early eighteenth-century writer and satirist, published an anti-Catholic history of the Papacy between 1725 and 1729; see De Vet, 'Weyerman en zijn Kartuizer'.

<sup>199</sup> [J. Barueth?], *De advocaet der vaderlandsche kerk*, II, 69.

<sup>200</sup> Frijhoff, 'Katholieke toekomstverwachting ten tijde van de Republiek'.

<sup>201</sup> Frijhoff, 'De paniek van juni 1734'.

Locke, the *Journal Littéraire* of the 1730s was not averse to granting toleration to Catholics. The editors argued that even though the cult is idolatrous, the Pope's supreme authority unacceptable, the bloody persecution by the Church objectionable and the Catholic religion itself intolerant, there is no reason not to suppose that a Catholic can live peacefully in a Protestant land.<sup>202</sup> Given this rather limited view of religious freedom it is hardly surprising that Catholics did not figure largely in the Dutch toleration debate. Indeed, appreciation of Catholicism was highly ambivalent. Even among critical dissenters, reflections on the subordinate position of Dutch Catholics were at best an offshoot of other concerns. For example, the *Netherlands Spectator* complained in 1752 that Catholics were often blamed unjustly for the political misfortunes of the Republic, and that their position was sometimes comparable to that of the early Christians under Nero. The main design of this essay was not, however, to defend Roman Catholics, but to undermine the authority of the public clergy. The public church had anchored itself in Dutch society by forcing young children to memorize the catechism by heart, an education resulting in Reformed adults whose inability to judge for themselves was matched by a blind belligerency towards all ideas and habits not sanctioned by the Calvinist catechizers of their youth. Prejudice against Catholics was only one instance of the general popular ignorance perpetuated by the clergy. Although this writer was undeniably mild in his judgement of Catholics, he made it perfectly clear throughout his journal that those who looked towards Rome would first have to distance themselves from the pretensions of their 'hierarchy' before they could be accepted as equals.<sup>203</sup> The central argument in the Protestant debate on religious liberty, 'that Holy Scripture is the only, clear and perfect rule of our faith (. . .) and that apart from Scripture all other rules should be regarded as the work of fallible men,'<sup>204</sup> was as much a forceful defence of religious liberty as it was an outright disqualification of Roman Catholicism. As long as the main thrust of the toleration debate was the release from ignorance and superstition of all those unfortunate fellow men who

<sup>202</sup> Van Otten, 'Het tolerantievraagstuk in het *Journal Littéraire*'.

<sup>203</sup> *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, IV, No. 87: 'Over de Katechizeermeesters', 80.

<sup>204</sup> *Deductie voor het regt van de vrijheid van geloove, godsdienst, en conscientie* (s.a.), 14–15; for a full translation of the text, see Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 217–279.

were enslaved by the irrational and illegitimate claims of presumptuous religious authorities, Roman Catholics would stand outside the national fold. So they did, until well into the nineteenth century. Moreover, the aversion to institutional Catholicism was hardly a Calvinist idiosyncrasy. If the claim that all men are free to interpret the Bible as they deem fit was instrumental to undermining the confessional public sphere, it simultaneously led to the creation of a polite public in which Catholics were at best allocated a position of cultural and intellectual subservience.

Encouraged by their semi-legalized status but cherishing their Counter-Reformational roots, Catholic intellectuals strove for respectability rather than rights. Any anticlerical or anti-Calvinist feelings they might have had were rarely overtly expressed.<sup>205</sup> Dutch Catholics wanted to be accepted as decent Christians and citizens of the Republic and to practise their religion in public while outwardly recognizing the dominant status of the Calvinist church.<sup>206</sup> Apologists rallied to the support of the yearly celebration of the 'Miracle of Amsterdam', claiming that the fact that the sacred host did not burn when it was thrown into a fire in 1345 was based on irrefutable historical evidence. There was, therefore, no question of superstition and idolatry in expressing reverence for such miracles. Catholics were decent Christians who interpreted miracles no differently than Protestants did the resurrection of Christ.<sup>207</sup> They wished to be treated in a similar fashion to Protestant dissenters. Nevertheless, the priest who published a sermon defending the infallibility of the Pope ought to have known better; as late as 1774 publication of the book was forbidden in Holland.<sup>208</sup> Catholic pastors responded to the call for the annual prayer-day meeting issued by the government, underlining their acquiescence to the existing regime.<sup>209</sup> To some extent, the

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<sup>205</sup> Cf. in this regard an anonymous pamphlet, *De advocaat der Roomsch-Catholijke Kerk* [*The advocate of the Roman Catholic Church*] (1772–1773), which was highly critical of the public church (cf. 30–31, on the Synod of Dort as a convention of so many individual popes), turning instead to the civil magistrates as guarantors of toleration.

<sup>206</sup> J. Melgers, *Vreest God, geeft eer aan den koning* [*Fear God, honour the king*] (1777); the tract was praised abundantly in the orthodox *NB* 1777-i, 118–122.

<sup>207</sup> Clemens, 'Het Mirakel van Amsterdam'.

<sup>208</sup> *Jongelenen* no. 118.

<sup>209</sup> Cf. A. Wittert (no dates), *Kortbondige verhandeling, waar in bewezen wordt, dat de Roomsch-Catholyken der Vereenigde Nederlanden in gemoede verpligt zyn ook den algemeenen*

higher social strata participated in social life. Catholic pastors joined natural societies, where they contributed to the flowering of physico-theology—a relatively harmless interconfessional pastime to which both Protestants and Catholics could lend a hand. In 1785 the Catholic priest Petrus Schouten won a prize, awarded by the Society for the Good of the Public, for a popular essay on the arguments afforded by Nature and Reason for the existence of God.<sup>210</sup> Catholics joined such societies to discuss the economics of the Republic, write poetry, read books, and generally promote the cause of humankind. A four-volume devotional book by the Catholic priest Thomas Hellinx (1715–1777) appeared posthumously, and the publishers expected that it would soon be sold out because all kinds of Christians showed an interest in it.<sup>211</sup> Catholics published a journal, the *Ecclesiastical Library*, in which several anonymous ‘friends of true Religion and humankind’ wrote and translated articles for ‘the benefit of church and civil society’.<sup>212</sup> In general, however, the schism within the Catholic Church itself represented an enormous drain on intellectual resources; suspicions of Jansenism were enough to stifle any signs of creativity. Dutch Catholics let the German *katholische Aufklärung* pass unnoticed.<sup>213</sup> They did not criticize or question the celebration of private Mass, the use of Latin, the adoration of saints, or the observance of celibacy.

Thus, the integration of Catholics into society between 1770 and 1790 was limited. When the amicable orthodox Orangist Jan Scharp (1756–1828) wrote a poem in praise of his deceased Roman Catholic colleague (he called him ‘a worthy member of the Universal church’) in 1786, he still caused a lot of commotion in the Reformed Church.<sup>214</sup>

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*dank- vast- en bededag te houden* [Concise treatise demonstrating that Roman Catholics in the United Provinces are obliged in conscience to hold general thanksgiving, fast, and prayer days] (1770).

<sup>210</sup> Clemens, ‘De maatschappij tot Nut van ’t Algemeen’. The Lutheran Willem Goede relates in Starck, *Vrijmoedige bedenkingen over het Christendom*, II (1791), VII, that he was accused of disseminating the Catholic religion when he distributed several copies of Schouten’s ‘excellent booklet’ among the youths of his congregation.

<sup>211</sup> Th. Hellinx, *Meditatien op het lyden van Jezus-Christus* [Meditations on the passion of Christ] (1779–1783). The orthodox Kuypers valued the book; *Neerlands licht uit duisternis*, 32.

<sup>212</sup> Bornewasser, ‘Verlichting en anti-Verlichting in de katholieke tijdschriften’, 7–10; *Kerkelyke Bibliotheek*, Amsterdam 1792–1795.

<sup>213</sup> Bornewasser, ‘Die Aufklärung und die Katholiken’.

<sup>214</sup> Barger, *Scharp*, 14–19.

Catholics were believed to be in need of even more enlightenment than traditional Protestants.<sup>215</sup> In fact, a sufficiently civilized Catholic was to all appearances a Protestant who had the misfortune to have been born into the wrong church. If these suppositions were shared at all by the Catholics themselves, only a handful took the obvious step. Franciscus Adrianus van Achter (1721–1789), for example, was a Catholic priest and Augustine monk who left Gent in 1753 for conscience's sake and came to Rotterdam, where he prepared himself for membership of the Reformed Church by reading traditional Calvinist books.<sup>216</sup> Such converts produced useful propaganda for orthodox Calvinists and anti-Catholic dissenters alike,<sup>217</sup> while conversions by prominent persons to Catholicism—such as the later Friedrich II (1720–1785), landgrave of Hesse-Kassel—were experienced as extremely discomfiting.<sup>218</sup> Anything detracting from the authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church was welcomed in the press. Artful, fanatic and power-hungry Jesuits were intensely disliked by Protestants of every hue and colour.<sup>219</sup> The policy of Joseph II to curtail the authority of Rome by dissolving monasteries and putting seminaries under state control was praised,<sup>220</sup> although the

<sup>215</sup> See also Hagen, 'Antikatholicisme, nationaal besef en de Nederlandse spectators'.

<sup>216</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 145 note 10; *NNBW* VI, col. 8; in due course Van Achter became the director of a Latin school.

<sup>217</sup> E.g. the anti-Catholic accounts concerning Ferdinand Ambrosius Fidler (1737–1780), an Austrian Catholic who converted to Lutheranism: *Korte schets der merkwaardigste omstandigheden, nopens de vlugt uit het klooster* [Short sketch of the extraordinary circumstances concerning the escape from the convent] (1773) and *Onvervalscht character* [True character] (1773). Likewise translated into Dutch were Fidler's anti-Catholic *Der Proselyt* (D.tr. [1773]); and *Antipapistisches Journal* (D.tr. 1773). Cf. also the *Kloostergeschiedenis van pater Anjanus Horn en pater Mansueutus Oehninger* [Convent history of (. . .)] (1778); Georg Oehninger (1713–?) had been a Capuchin monk for 44 years; mistreated in the convent, he fled to Berlin where he converted to the Reformed faith in 1774. Of course, the Catholics in the Southern Netherlands had their own propaganda. Cf. the German Jesuit Georg Kaufmann (1736–1783), with his *Vier verschiedene zwischen zweyen reformirten Bürgern Hiob und Simson angestellte Discurse* (1738); D.tr. *Vier zamen-spraken* (1740); Job and Samson discuss the Heidelberg Catechism, and need to say both are converted to the Catholic Church; the book was forbidden at Deventer.

<sup>218</sup> The orthodox *NB* 1778-ii, 222–223 published a letter by Pope Benedict XIV on Friedrich's conversion; the same periodical promptly outlined the reasons why another prominent figure had converted from Catholicism to Calvinism in 1623; *NB* 1778-ii, 326–339.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. [Urbanus Catholicus], *De waare oorsprong, schielijke aanwas en omverhoedze val der Jesuiten* [The true origins, covert growth and sudden fall of the Jesuits] (1767). The *NB* 1781-ii, 205–224, included a lengthy account of the unrest caused by a Jesuit preacher in German Mulheim.

<sup>220</sup> *De afschaffing der nonnenkloosters* [The abolition of nunneries], Nijmegen 1782. [Joseph

press also sympathized with Catholics who rejected the arbitrary measures of the Austrian emperor.<sup>221</sup> There was interest in the collegialist writings by Joseph Valentin Eybel (1741–1805), professor of church law at Vienna until Joseph II put him in charge of issues concerning toleration in 1779.<sup>222</sup> The provisions for the toleration of Protestants decreed by the enlightened monarch likewise received much attention.<sup>223</sup> Again, Austrian criticism of the Roman Church served as a useful instrument to criticize all clerical ‘hierarchies’, including the Dutch one. In one anticlerical ABC the ‘C’ stood for ‘Christian’, that is, those inhabitants of Europe who took traditional truths for granted and arrogated to themselves the authority to oppress everyone who did not share their views.<sup>224</sup> Even when the Catholics began to vie for political influence by claiming rights to freedom of worship and representation in government, their role was a limited one. In the Patriot movement of the 1780s, the only Catholics with pronounced political ideas were foreigners. A substantial number of Catholics did support the Patriots, but most did so tentatively, and outspoken radicals were hard to find.<sup>225</sup> Some Catholics fled to France after the restoration of 1787, but it is not certain how many.<sup>226</sup>

After the separation of church and state in 1796, legal emancipation was overshadowed by cultural exclusion. Since at least the 1760s, public opinion had held Catholics as culturally inferior citizens, retarded in their spiritual and intellectual development. A peri-

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Kreutzenstein], *Die Reformation in Teutschland zu Ende des 18ten Jahrhunderts* (1782); D.tr. *De hervorming in Duitschland, aan het einde der agttiende eeuw* [c. 1782]. An essay on the increase in toleration as a result of Joseph’s measures in *NB* 1784-ii, 12–20.

<sup>221</sup> *Het vermogen van den souverein in de bepaaling van de vrye godsdienstoefening onderzocht* [*The power of the sovereign in determining freedom of worship*], Amsterdam 1785; *VL* 1785-i, 509. The Catholic author argued that Joseph’s edicts were a flagrant infringement of natural law.

<sup>222</sup> [J.V. Eybel], *Was ist der Papst?* (1782); D.tr. *Wat is de paus?*, Nijmegen, [c. 1782]. Cf. also Anton Ferdinand von Geissau (1746–1809), a free-lance Austrian historian, who wrote a *Catholyk onderrigt op de vraag, wat is de paus?* [*Catholic instruction on the question (. . .)?*] [c. 1782]; see *VL* 1782-i, 408–410.

<sup>223</sup> *Staet-zedekundige geloofsbydenis eens burgers der negentiende eeuw* [*Political and moral confession of a nineteenth-century citizen*] (1782); *De dankbaare Protestant jegens zynen verdraegzaemen keizer* [*The thankful Protestant to his tolerant emperor*] (1782); both translated from the German. Cf. also *Myne bewyzen tegen de verdraegzaamheid* [*My proofs against forbearance*] [c. 1782], ostensibly written by a Catholic priest who opposes toleration but loses the argument; *VL* 1782-i, 567–568.

<sup>224</sup> *Het Weener A.B.C. boek, voor volwassene lieden* [*The Viennese ABC for adults*] [1782]; duly countered by a Dutch Catholic: *Het anti Weener A.B.C. boek* (1782).

<sup>225</sup> Van de Sande, ‘Tussen argwaan en overtuiging.’

<sup>226</sup> Polman, *Katholiek Nederland in de achttiende eeuw*, II, 206.

odical reputed to be the most progressive characteristically devoted an essay to demonstrating why superstitious Catholics were most prone to using the name of God in vain.<sup>227</sup> In the early nineteenth century, the freedom of worship granted to Catholics was accompanied by a concerted effort to restrict their influence in the public domain.<sup>228</sup> The possibility of effecting change in politics and society increasingly became the exclusive privilege of a broad Protestant majority, which protected its interests in public life as jealously as once the Calvinist church had done, but using other means. The views of this new Protestant elite will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. In the present chapter, we have seen that the acquiescence to confessional control on behalf of some dissenters may be contrasted with the resignation and even opposition of others. By emphasizing their adherence to Trinitarian doctrine, orthodox Mennonites (and probably orthodox Remonstrants as well) generally assented to the existence of a confessional public sphere, including their own subservient position within it. Among the Roman Catholics, many were resigned to a life under Calvinist domination; none dared speak openly of an end to Calvinist rule. Opposition could be found especially among Arminians, Collegiants, the later Mennonites, and the later Reformed. Many of these critics tried to instigate and influence toleration debates by translating latitudinarian texts written by authoritative English and Swiss commentators.

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<sup>227</sup> *VL* 1782-ii, 28–33.

<sup>228</sup> Clemens, 'De terugdringing van de rooms-katholieken'.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### FREE REPUBLICS, ALIEN CIVILIZATIONS AND IDEAL STATES

#### INTRODUCTION: FROM FREETHINKING TO FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

Legitimizing freedom of thought by means of an appropriate metaphysics, eighteenth-century Protestant dissenters took up the libertarian cause of freethinkers like Anthony Collins (1676–1729; *A discourse of freethinking*, 1713).<sup>1</sup> Epitomized by the writings of Hoadly's friend, the Anglican divine Samuel Clarke (1675–1729), such orderly metaphysics posited the existence of an omnipotent and benevolent God, elaborating in particular on the divinely ordained 'reasonableness and fitness of things'. Clarke emphasized obligations resulting from each individual's judgement on the reasonableness and fitness of things, and thus strongly defended the need to follow one's own conscience freely. The Dutch dissenters' appeal to the Clarkean metaphysics of reasonableness, fitness, obligation, and liberty marks their opposition to the orthodox confessional public sphere as well as their attempt to suggest a tenable alternative. We have seen that Marten Schagen had begun to issue translations of writings by Clarke and his followers, who included John Balguy (1686–1748), William Wollaston (c. 1659–1724), and James Foster (1697–1753). Wollaston was available to the Dutch only in English and French, while Balguy appeared in Dutch translation in Schagen's *Diversions*. Clarke himself was amply available in the Netherlands. His 'mathematical' defense of Christianity in the Boyle Lectures of 1704 and 1705, published as the *Discourse concerning the being and attributes of God*,<sup>2</sup> earned him a reputation as an incomparable opponent of deism. His fame

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<sup>1</sup> Miller, "Freethinking" and "freedom of thought"; Miller, *Defining the Common Good*, 266–348.

<sup>2</sup> D.tr. S. Clarke, *Eene verhandeling over Gods bestaan en eigenschappen* (1753), tr. by J. Boelaard, a Mennonite [no dates]; reissued in 1769. Boelaard mentions the two previous translators in Schagen's *Diversions*: J.S. Centen and 'E.V.C.A.'.

was so great that some regarded him as a potential Archbishop of Canterbury, a position he never obtained for writing his controversial *The Scripture doctrine concerning the Trinity* (1712). Although this book was never translated, the Dutch generally regarded Clarke as an established divine who favoured Arianism and natural theology; obviously, his writings were useful instruments in the hands of Dutch dissenters attempting to subvert the dominion of Dort.<sup>3</sup> Radical followers of Clarke, such as the controversial Anglican Henry Taylor (1711–1785), began to surface in the Netherlands only in the second half of the century.<sup>4</sup>

The Unitarian Baptist James Foster likewise opposed deists, Anthony Collins in particular, by writing books on natural religion.<sup>5</sup> His *Discourses on all the principal branches of natural religion and social virtue* (1749–1752) was a Clarkean attack on deism but at the same time thoroughly subverted orthodox tradition by its emphasis on reason and virtue. The work was well known in the Netherlands, partly because of the many excerpts published in a major periodical.<sup>6</sup> Foster has been underrated as a purveyor of dissent. He got an immense amount of coverage on the continent in general and the Netherlands in particular.<sup>7</sup> He was very popular among Dutch religious dissidents, both within and without the public church, including the learned, the powerful and the rich; a man as high up in the social

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *VL* 1767-i, 45–52: Calvinist divines could hardly be expected to agree with Clarke, but they could not deny that he was very clever.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *De Recensent* II (1790), 179, on Taylor's *The apology of Ben Mordecai*, (1771–1777). The reviewer qualified the book as 'one of the most excellent apologies for Christianity', although he certainly knew that it espoused the Apollinarian heresy.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. also the Hoadleian A.A. Sykes, with *Essay on the truth of the Christian religion* (1725); D.tr. *Waarheid van den Christelijke godsdienst*, Haarlem 1730.

<sup>6</sup> Excerpts were published in *VL* 1764-ii, 509–519 (on the obscurity of reason and the corruptions of Christianity); *VL* 1765-ii, 502–510, 547–555 (on the self-government of man and the duty of self-denial); all translated by 'P.A.' Also *VL* 1767-ii, 511–525; *VL* 1769-ii, 179–184; *VL* 1769-ii, 249–256; all translated by 'L.S.' A sermon by Foster was translated as late as 1785: *VL* 1785-ii, 555–561, 603–610.

<sup>7</sup> On Foster in Germany, see Van Eijnatten, 'The debate on religious unity', 344–345; also Schröder, 'Aporien des theologischen Liberalismus'. Foster's attack on Tindal was also well-known: *Usefulness, truth, and excellency of the Christian religion* (1731); D.tr. *Verdediging der nuttigheid, waarheid, en voortreffelijkheid der christelijke openbaaring* (1777). Included in the latter was a biography of Foster from the *Journal Britannique* (1753), 281–303; a favourable review in *VL* 1777-i, 285–292. A biography based on English sources appeared in *VL* (1769-ii), 331–335, with much praise for Foster's sincerity, zeal and moderation, and for his pursuit of 'mutual charity, and harmony of spirit among Christians of all denominations.'

echelons as Willem Bentinck put great value on him.<sup>8</sup> Barbeyrac had expressed great sympathy for Foster in the *Bibliothèque Raisonné* during the 1730s.<sup>9</sup> The Englishman's popularity is illustrated by the fact that Dutch Arminians were still deliberating at the end of the century whether to translate his Unitarian *Essay on fundamentals* (1720); they refrained from doing so for fear of upsetting public opinion.<sup>10</sup> We shall come back to Foster's sermons later.<sup>11</sup>

Samuel Clarke's combination of moral obligation and doctrinal leniency played a part in popularizing discourse on civil liberty, natural rights, and freedom of thought in the second half of the eighteenth century. The philosophy of the German Christian Wolff was no less instrumental in disseminating notions of religious and intellectual freedom that were metaphysically sound as well as socially acceptable.<sup>12</sup> The moderately libertarian opposition to the orthodox public sphere contributed substantially to the genesis of a polite public, and ultimately also to the momentous transition from the merely polite to the overtly political. This chapter is devoted to the relations between political and religious liberty as they were discussed in the course of the century by a wide variety of Dutch authors. Not all of these authors were concerned to develop a metaphysics in Clarkean or Wolffian vein, preserving traditional notions of God while incorporating a greater measure of freedom. On the contrary, some, like the Spinozists, dispensed altogether with traditional religion and staked radical claims to individual freedom.

This chapter focuses on the contributions to the Dutch toleration debate of political theorists, jurists, philosophers, and various independent writers, who were more often than not virulently anticlerical and sometimes even radically opposed to the prevailing political

<sup>8</sup> Van den Berg, 'Willem Bentinck', 170.

<sup>9</sup> See Rotondò, 'Stampa periodica olandese'; Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, 204–206.

<sup>10</sup> Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 84.

<sup>11</sup> Another Baptist was Daniel Turner (1710–1798), with a *Compendium of social religion* (1758); D.tr. *Verhandeling over de natuur en gesteldheid van Christen-kerken* (1762). Like Foster, Turner was much enamoured of the idea of a universal church.

<sup>12</sup> For the influence of Clarke and his followers on Stinstra and his circle, see Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 178–184. On Wolff, see also section 7.4. Cf. an essay on moral obligations and natural law referring to both Wolff and Wollaston, in *VL* 1764-ii, 85–99; the essay was culled from the *Saggio della morale filosofica* by Paolo Frisi (1728–1784), professor of mathematics at Milan. On the combination of Wolff and Clarke in Germany, cf. Dierse, 'Nachträge zu G.F. Meiers Religionsphilosophie,' 41–42.

system. Many of them reflected on the virtues of the ‘universal church’, some wrote political blueprints that may be read as outright denunciations of, and idealistic alternatives to, the confessional public sphere, and virtually all emphasized secular control over the clergy. In the sections that follow, relations between religious and political liberty will be examined from various perspectives. The first section examines several republican writers of the early eighteenth century, illustrating views that were characteristic of many of those who held political power in the Dutch Republic (5.1). The next section discusses critics of the orthodox public sphere who utilized a traditional means to voice their grudge: didactic poetry (5.2). Spinozist philosophies and utopian representations of the ideal commonwealth are the topics of, respectively, sections 5.3 and 5.4; both sections are concerned with radical, mostly anonymous critics of both the confessional and the polite public sphere. The gradual transition from confessional control to polite debate is reflected in the writings of several natural law theorists, who are discussed in sections 5.5 and 5.6. The final two sections are concerned with the combined pursuit of political and religious liberty during the *Patriottentijd* (5.7) and the politico-religious debates related to the Batavian Revolution of 1795 (5.8). The various sections have been ordered in a roughly chronological fashion, thus setting the stage for a discussion of the polite public in chapters 6 and 7.

### 5.1 MAGISTERIAL REPUBLICANS

The first group of authors to be discussed in this chapter consists of several political theorists of the first half of the eighteenth century. All were aristocratic republicans and firm advocates of secular control over religion, although their views on the nature and extent of state control differed considerably. We shall successively discuss writings by Lieven de Beaufort, two anonymous writers, and Simon van Slingelandt.

Lieven de Beaufort (1675–1730) was a *regent* on the island of Tholen in Zeeland, who wrote what is considered to be one of the main Dutch republican tracts of his time, the *Treatise on freedom in the civil state*, published posthumously, and anonymously, in 1737.<sup>13</sup> Claiming

<sup>13</sup> [L.F. de Beaufort], *Verhandeling van de vryheit in den burgerstaet* (1737).

to have written a substitute for the lost books of Cicero's *De republica*,<sup>14</sup> De Beaufort tried to convey a sense of the frailty and transient nature of republican freedom.<sup>15</sup> The commonwealth he envisaged was a careful mediation between aristocratic and democratic elements. Government, he stated, should be based on prudent moderation (*voorsigtige gemaetigheid*). This was precisely the harmonious government he, as an ardent republican, believed to be characteristic of the United Provinces; a political order based on friendship, reason, mutual indulgence, and persuasion, and exemplified by the government of the States of Holland. De Beaufort's *Treatise* is basically a discussion of the many ways in which true republican freedom may be threatened, externally but also and above all internally, by negligence, lies, luxury, ambition, fear, and so on. It is not a plea for representative democracy, but an apology for the power of *regenten*, based on the notion that the magistrates represent the people and that the exercise of power should in principle be open to all talented and virtuous citizens. De Beaufort was also the writer of the main eighteenth-century biography of William of Orange, an exhaustive narrative in three tomes published posthumously in 1732. Here the prince is praised for his political wisdom and moderation but censured for his ambition. Not the prince but the hand of God is the principal reason why eighteenth-century citizens of the Dutch Republic enjoyed freedom, argued De Beaufort.<sup>16</sup>

De Beaufort's *Treatise* demonstrates how classical republicanism could go hand in hand with confessional Calvinism. His views are conservative, in the sense that he subscribed to the idea of an 'ancient constitution' of which the Reformed Church was supposed to be an integral part. In the fifth chapter, in which he extols republican government (i.e. by the States and without a Stadtholder), De Beaufort admits that such government is not without its defects. However, he continues, this mode of government is at the same time 'so lenient, so agreeable, and so beneficial' with regard to its subjects, that no reasonable man can and should expect more. The subjects of such an administration cannot only stake a claim to complete civil freedom, but also to complete religious freedom. Each man is lord and

<sup>14</sup> Klein, *Patriots Republikanisme*, 72.

<sup>15</sup> For the following, see Velema, 'God, de deugd en de oude constitutie.'

<sup>16</sup> On De Beaufort's *Het leven van Willem de I* [*Life of William I*], see Schutte, 'Grondvester of belager der vrijheid?', 66–69.

master over himself, his children and his property, and obeys only the law. He is free as long as he submits to the law and shows proper respect and obedience to it. Likewise, in these lands each man may believe everything that agrees with the light of his conscience, as long as he behaves virtuously and does nothing that may lead to public vexation and opprobrium, or causes harm to the established religion. This is a gift rarely bestowed upon a people, and one praised by all noble and sensible men. Under the present government, De Beaufort observes, people are free because they have been freed from the yoke of servitude imposed by the Roman Church.<sup>17</sup>

It may be helpful to contrast De Beaufort's views on religion with his political views. As a political writer, De Beaufort strove to combine negative with positive freedom, an attempt characteristic of Machiavelli as well as the Dutch seventeenth-century republican tradition.<sup>18</sup> People are free for two reasons. They are free because they reside under the law and are protected by it (negative freedom), and because they participate in the government of the community (positive freedom). De Beaufort does not apply this dual notion of political liberty to religious liberty. Citizens, to paraphrase the *Verhandeling*, are free in religious matters because they are protected by the law and because no one may coerce them in their personal convictions. But it is not apparent that they are free in a positive sense; that is, they are not free to worship God publicly in whatever way they like and to contribute to moulding the religious character of the community. De Beaufort's republican claim that citizens should have free access to public office is contradicted by his insistence that these same citizens are required to subscribe to a particular confession. In his chapter on 'The means by which Liberty is preserved', he discussed what he called 'one of the principal basic rules of Statecraft, and one which conduces most of all to the preservation of the Free Government of our Land.' This rule, he said, concerns the maintenance of the 'Christian Reformed Religion', as established by law, and as taught and preached in this land. This may seem a peculiar assertion, admits De Beaufort. Some people will question whether the Reformed faith has any relation at all to political freedom. De

<sup>17</sup> [De Beaufort], *Verhandeling van de vryheit*, 134–135.

<sup>18</sup> On the political argument, see Velema, 'God, de deugd en de oude constitutie', 479–481.

Beaufort explains that his rule does not apply to all free governments, but only to the free government of this particular land. Once we accept this, then it is clear that in the Dutch Republic the Reformed faith has been established by law as a 'principal foundation' of government, that all magistrates and civil servants are obliged by oath to defend and maintain it, and that everything in the land has been ordered according to it. In other words, any changes in the public religion of the land will endanger the state and its free government. As William of Orange said, the land will not be able to survive for more than three days without the Reformed faith. This axiom seemed even truer in the eighteenth than in the sixteenth century. Anyone versed in the history of church and state knows that the threat of alteration, or even the slightest change in matters of faith and worship, has always been the cause of troubles and discord. The established faith may not be changed. De Beaufort lavished praise on Solomon, a man with a great knowledge of statecraft, unlike contemporary Machiavellians, and with a sense of responsibility for the pure faith; 'true Religion, in general, was his first and foremost concern.'<sup>19</sup>

De Beaufort had two other reasons for holding that republican freedom is best preserved in the Netherlands through maintenance of the Calvinist faith. One reason is that the Presbyterian government of the Reformed Church, imported into the Netherlands from France, corresponded in many ways to the government of the state. The way church councils, consistories and synods operated much resembled the way town councils, Provincial States and the States General worked. The other reason is the lack of an ecclesiastical hierarchy in the Reformed Church. A bishop would influence the proper working of the States negatively, since his spiritual authority and wealth would not harmonize with the principle of equality on which the States were based. Almost as an afterthought, De Beaufort observed that he did not expect the dissenting religious groups to become large enough to pose a threat to the state. The only exception were the Roman Catholics, who worked secretly to undermine it.<sup>20</sup> De Beaufort's defence of Calvinism was mirrored in his discussion of providential history. He believed that anyone who closely studied the Dutch past would find much evidence of the fact that

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<sup>19</sup> [De Beaufort], *Verhandeling van de vryheit*, 172–173.

<sup>20</sup> [De Beaufort], *Verhandeling van de vryheit*, 477–484.



the United Provinces were founded and preserved through God's special providence (and not, in consequence, as a result of the political competence of William of Orange). The unintentional birth, in the face of widespread oppression, resistance, intrigue and trickery, of a powerful and free Republic cannot be attributed to chance. God granted the Dutch the same favour he gave to the Hebrews, bestowing on both a pure and simple religion, and a true worship characterized by leniency and moderation.<sup>21</sup> Not surprisingly, given his preoccupation with stability, concord was one of De Beaufort's primary concerns. Concord, he claimed, is the main bond of a free government, and for this reason the Dutch state took Sallust's 'concordia res parvae crescunt' as its motto.<sup>22</sup> De Beaufort attempted logically to integrate religion in republican theory, but he narrowed the thrust of his argument to the claim that there is political freedom only for those who subscribe to an ecclesiastical formulary.

Another related tract applauded States-oriented government without explicitly defending the position of the Reformed Church; it made use of theological rather than classical republican arguments. The *Open-hearted considerations on freedom* (1738) were also published anonymously, but in this case the writer unfortunately remains unknown.<sup>23</sup> The *Considerations* were explicitly intended as a sequel to De Beaufort's ruminations on liberty. In his preface, the author informed the reader that it was his aim to derive his considerations from fundamental principles. He particularly wished to focus on the freedom of the human will, since this is an issue often misunderstood. It has frequently been asserted that every limitation of the human will is contrary to freedom. This, however, is untrue, because a will without limitations does not give rise to freedom but to independence; and independence is not part of the human condition. All men are dependent, for only God is independent, claimed the author, who put forward a moral philosophy based on theological considerations regarding original sin. Freedom can be realized only in dependence; man is

<sup>21</sup> [De Beaufort], *Verhandeling van de vryheit*, 550, 559, 573–576.

<sup>22</sup> [De Beaufort], *Verhandeling van de vryheit*, 424–425.

<sup>23</sup> [Anon.], *Vrymoedige bedenkingen over de vryheid* (1738). The tract is discussed in Velema, 'God, de deugd en de oude constitutie', 485–489. The book has often been ascribed to Cornelis van Bynkershoek, but there is little proof of this; according to the dedication (to 'the lovers of freedom') it was written at Middelburg in Zeeland.

free when he operates according to the end for which he has been created.<sup>24</sup>

Man has been placed by God in a nexus of natural relations, and this nexus consists of man's ability to function as a reasonable creature, according to the end or purpose for which he has been created. What, then, is the end or purpose of creation? Some theologians claim that it is the glorification of God. The author, however, claimed that God, more than anything else, is love, and that love is the purpose of creation. God communicates to man His virtues and perfections (insofar as man is capable of accepting them), in order that he may be united with him in love. To be thus united with God is, therefore, also the end of each man. The ways in which God brings about this end differ from individual to individual, but they are always for the best. We do not recognize his wisdom in choosing the means by which we are to fulfil our purpose in life because we are limited by nature. With regard to God, man's freedom is the fulfilment of his purpose within the created totality of natural relations; freedom in this sense consists of his ability to obey the divine laws out of sheer love. Similarly, with regard to his fellow human beings, man's freedom is his ability to obey the 'natural law' that we love our neighbour as we love ourselves.<sup>25</sup> The author enlarged on these and similar themes, only to conclude in his sixth chapter that, to his own misfortune, man does not pursue the end for which he has been created. His 'bad desires and prejudices' cause him to aspire to other goals. Having become a slave to sin, man has lost his natural liberty. To be restored to our original state we must first belong to Christ, who will bestow upon us the principle of freedom, which is the principle of God's love. The more we believe, the more freedom we possess, and the happier we become. Freedom and society, then, is possible through the loving and benevolent association of human beings, to further the well-being of each as prescribed by the law of nature, which is the law of love.<sup>26</sup>

In his supreme wisdom God has decided to restore man to his pristine liberty gradually, step by step, by prescribing forms of society that correspond to man's condition, and prevent him from following his own desires and prejudices. Old Testament theocracy was

<sup>24</sup> [Anon.], *Vrymoedige bedenkingen over de vryheid*, 'Voorbericht' and 15–27.

<sup>25</sup> [Anon.], *Vrymoedige bedenkingen over de vryheid*, 33–34, 43.

<sup>26</sup> [Anon.], *Vrymoedige bedenkingen over de vryheid*, 52–67.

one form of society suited to the advancement of man's well-being and the restoration of his freedom. As such, it prefigured the universal dominion of Christ, whose laws are nothing but 'Love and Friendliness'. How is it possible to ensure that present-day governments also aspire to the common good? Which power is higher than theirs? Certainly not that of the clergy! The clergy is and should be wholly subordinate to the civil authorities. The authorities have the duty to maintain and protect the well-being of the church, since religious worship is an essential aspect of the well-being of society, and they consequently have the right to enforce the cloth to do what it is supposed to do. The clergy have no call to criticize the authorities for making decisions that do not accord with the demands of the church; and the magistracy has every right to silence those who are guilty of such unbridled behaviour. Following this anticlerical tirade, the author finds a solution to his problem in contract theory. The civil authorities have been appointed by an association of families to wield power, in compliance with 'the great purpose' of furthering the common good through benevolent and gentle means.<sup>27</sup> In such a society, true freedom will reign. Such a society will logically be a democracy (as, in fact, the Old Testament theocracy had been), in which excellent subjects of the state are elected to represent the body of subjects as a whole. Such a society, finally, can be found in the Dutch Republic.<sup>28</sup>

De Beaufort's anonymous successor was less given to defending Calvinism, but he, too, put the authority to define the limits of religious toleration into the hands of the magistracy. At one point the author observes that universal grace is the true end of creation, and contends that particular and universal grace are interconnected, in spite of the views of some people.<sup>29</sup> The author's theology, as well as his explicit association between divine law and divine love, seems to indicate Lutheran influence. A similar argument was put forward by Johann Gottlieb Heineccius (1681–1741) in his *Elementa iuris naturae et gentium* (1738), which, in turn, borrowed much from Pufendorf. Heineccius was a German law scholar who in 1723 had opted for

<sup>27</sup> [Anon.], *Vrymoedige bedenkingen over de vryheid*, 67–80.

<sup>28</sup> [Anon.], *Vrymoedige bedenkingen over de vryheid*, 80–104. The author concludes in two final chapters that the Dutch owe 'some duties' to the House of Orange, but that the position of Stadtholder is not a part of the Dutch constitution.

<sup>29</sup> [Anon.], *Vrymoedige bedenkingen over de vryheid*, 27–30.

a professorship at Franeker.<sup>30</sup> Perhaps the author of the *Open-hearted considerations* had read Heineccius' book.

A third republican treatise was published in 1737 as *Comments on the reasoned exposition of the antiquity and sovereignty of the Lords Estates of Holland*.<sup>31</sup> This book evinces a detached and practical attitude to religious worship foreign to De Beaufort's *Treatise*, and its anticlerical potential is obvious though not pronounced. The *Comments* comprise a refutation of views defended by Pieter Bort († 1674), an outstanding lawyer in his own day. Bort, according to the author of the *Comments*, had defended the 'lawful and undeniable right to sovereignty' of magistrates, nobles, burgomasters and town councils. Instead of describing these political organs as representatives of the 'Republic, or the whole body of the people', he had subjected the people to the whims of a small, absolutist, ostensibly sovereign oligarchy.<sup>32</sup> True to his republican leanings, the anonymous author discussed the importance of freedom. He asserted that the Dutch enjoyed as great a measure of liberty as is possible in a civilized community of men. In Europe, no form of government better protected its subjects against tyranny, and yet managed to avoid civil agitation. Not that the Dutch had always been in possession of such freedom. This was actually only the case in Batavian antiquity and during the administrations of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (when Prince Maurice was under age) and Johan de Witt (when there was no Stadtholder). The present stadtholderless administration similarly guaranteed true freedom because it required citizens, not to live according to the whims of one man (the Stadtholder) or a group of men (Bort's sovereign oligarchy), but according to established law.<sup>33</sup>

No sovereign has a right to exercise religious authority. On the other hand, claimed the author. Christian magistrates, as nursing fathers and exhortators of the church (Jes. 49:23, 1 Thess. 5:12), have the right and duty to ensure that church meetings are held in an orderly fashion, and to make certain, in collaboration with the

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Bergfeld, 'Pufendorf und Heineccius', 233; Bergfeld mentions Fénelon as a possible influence on Heineccius with regard to the notion of divine love. See also Schneider, *Justitia Universalis*, 286–327.

<sup>31</sup> [Anon.], *Aanmerkingen op het redenerend vertoog van de aloutheid en souvereiniteit der Heeren Staten van Holland* (1737).

<sup>32</sup> [Anon.], *Aanmerkingen op het redenerend vertoog*, 'Voorbericht'. On divine right theories of sovereignty in the seventeenth-century, see Kossmann, *Politieke theorie*.

<sup>33</sup> [Anon.], *Aanmerkingen op het redenerend vertoog*, 199–200.

clergy, that all manifestations of discord and schism are prevented. The magistracy is entitled to make judgements in religious matters, just as any other inhabitant of the land, but these judgements may never bind the consciences of subjects. As a prominent member of the church, a magistrate is bound to have much influence in church policy. As a secular magistrate, he is not to concern himself with spiritual and ecclesiastical issues. Naturally, those who uphold beliefs that endanger civil society should not be tolerated. The author provided some examples of the latter category. Threatening to the civil order, he noted, are those who argue in favour of persecution and intolerance with respect to other denominations (i.e. the orthodox clergy), or those who posit that moral good and evil are indifferent categories (i.e. antinomian pietists). Because nobody is master of his own religious convictions, those who err in good faith are not to be disciplined—the argument is reminiscent of Bayle. However, for the sake of prudence it is advisable to prevent the dissemination of error as much and as mildly as possible. Meanwhile, as guardians of the common peace, the civil authorities must ‘keep a watchful eye on the behaviour of the clergy, in order that they do not do anything disadvantageous to the common peace and civil Liberty.’<sup>34</sup> Clearly, no love was lost between the author and the clergy. Nor did the author have any particular affection for the Reformed. After drafting the Union of Utrecht, he observed, the towns and States of the Republic decided to protect the Reformed Church as the public or dominant church. However, they did so without imposing restrictions on the religious worship of other denominations. The policies of the Counter-Remonstrants were quite contrary to the basic principles underlying the constitution of the Republic. ‘Religion was only used as a front for different Political views,’ he stated.<sup>35</sup> The author’s magisterial desire for order, peace, and unity thus led him to the unadulterated Erastianism characteristic of much of the Dutch republican tradition. In his view, a broad and lenient public church should preside over the Republic, with few doctrinal shackles within and religious freedom without.

The fourth and final writer to be discussed in this section is Simon van Slingelandt (1664–1736). This writer took the States-oriented argument one step further, in a manuscript that for good reason

<sup>34</sup> [Anon.], *Aanmerkingen op het redenerend verhoog*, 178–180.

<sup>35</sup> [Anon.], *Aanmerkingen op het redenerend verhoog*, 139–140.

remained unpublished (it did not, in fact, surface until 1980). Van Slingelandt was a politician who ended his career at the very summit of power, as Grand Pensionary of the Province of Holland. He has always been something of a mystery.<sup>36</sup> Stemming from a *regent* family, he tended to remain aloof from the oligarchic political culture of the Dutch towns, and entered on his career in the service of the States General. He was a republican, albeit one who believed that the office of Stadtholder had a useful function in the state. Van Slingelandt was particularly anxious to deal with the Republic's defective form of government, expressing concern about the weaknesses and lethargy that resulted from the inability to make timely decisions in a highly decentralized polity. In the second and third decades of the eighteenth century, he put forward, with dogged perseverance, a number of proposals to mend this state of affairs. He achieved nothing and irritated many. His suggestions included equitable taxation, an efficient executive, and a more democratic government. When he died, Van Slingelandt bequeathed his possessions to the Reformed Church.

In 1727, Van Slingelandt wrote an advice pertaining to several religious issues brought up by the South Holland Synod. His advice directly confronted the ambiguity in De Beaufort's treatise concerning the religious limitations imposed on what was supposed to be the free exercise of republican citizenship. Van Slingelandt did not simply make out a case for toleration, but disputed the very legitimacy of the public church. Given its theme and anticlerical tenor, as well as the status of its author, the text was radical enough. The immediate ecclesiastical background to the manuscript is of some interest.<sup>37</sup> Worried about religious laxity among the people, the South Holland Synod had deliberated on the possibility of strengthening church control over the orthodoxy of preachers. Another point at issue was the conversion of a certain woman to Roman Catholicism. Should the Reformed Church be permitted to publicly proscribe her? The third subject discussed by the Synod concerned the publication of a number of Remonstrant writings harmful to the Reformed Church, in particular Drieberge's refutations of Van den Honert. Drieberge, claimed the synod, had stated that formularies of faith

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<sup>36</sup> Stork-Penning, 'Simon van Slingelandt'.

<sup>37</sup> The following is based on the introduction to Van Slingelandt's edition of the manuscript by Van Rappard, 'Een tolerant opstel'.

were merely human contrivances and that the church had no right to declare doctrines as binding. Such subversive Arminian writings ought to be forbidden.

The 1720s and 1730s were characterized by an attempt on behalf of the South Holland clergy to reinforce the public status of the Reformed Church. Van Slingelandt heard about the discussions via the political commissioner Van Hees, who generally managed to convince the synod to temper its demands, after having pressured it by using time-honoured magisterial methods such as protracted delays, formal objections, the delegation of issues to local administrative and juridical authorities, and the point-blank refusal to pass generalized resolutions.<sup>38</sup> It was largely due to his influence that Drieberge's writings were not forbidden. Van Slingelandt himself subscribed to practically all of Drieberge's ideas. His 'Short instruction on the rights of subjects and the power and the duty of the High Government in matters concerning religion or, as is commonly said, ecclesiastical issues',<sup>39</sup> is a concise text in which the problem of the public church is confronted directly. Slingelandt began by dropping his bombshell. He stated that the early Remonstrants and Calvinists both held erroneous views on the nature of the power exerted by the magistracy in religious matters. Both assumed wrongly that each land or territory must have a public religion and that this religion must be the faith adhered to by the government. In consequence, their discussion focused on the question of who exercises authority in and over the public church. The Remonstrants claimed that the magistracy has religious authority; the Counter-Remonstrants asserted that the clergy make the decisions which magistrates are subsequently obliged to implement.<sup>40</sup>

To illustrate the erroneous nature of the basic assumption shared by both parties, Van Slingelandt first provided a short overview of the history of the Christian church. As late as the period following on the reign of Constantine, the Christian faith was not regarded as a public or dominant religion (although even in this period reli-

<sup>38</sup> Bakhuizen van den Brink, 'Mr. Hendrik van Hees', 163.

<sup>39</sup> 'Korte aanwijzing van het regt der onderdanen en van de magt en pligt der Hooge Overheid ontrent het stuk van de godsdienst of gelijk men gemeenlijk segt, ontrent kerkelijke saken', in: Van Rappard, 'Een tolerant opstel', 184–202.

<sup>40</sup> Van Slingelandt, 'Korte aanwijzing', 184. On these seventeenth-century discussions, see Fries, *Die Lehre vom Staat*; De Visser, *Kerk en staat*; Nobbs, *Theocracy and toleration*; Conring, *Kirche und Staat*; Güldner, *Das Toleranz-Problem*.

gious leaders managed to influence the court to support orthodoxy and silence dissent). When the Pope had manipulated coarse and superstitious converts like the Goths and the Franks and accorded supreme religious power to himself, the belief became common that the Pope and the clergy must determine the contents of faith, and that the magistracy is obliged without further inquiry to lend support to the desires of church leaders. From this time on those who refused to adhere blindly to the doctrines of the public church were not only excluded from public office but also deprived of the elementary privileges of citizenship. Public profession of faith, or rather blind obeisance to the clergy, became a formal requirement for magistrates, civil servants and even citizens. In due course, the sixteenth-century Reformers came to reject these medieval claims. However, the Protestants soon found out that secular power could be used to buttress one doctrine at the cost of another, and so they, too, accorded the magistracy the capacity to interfere in religious matters (thus unintentionally giving Roman Catholic governments the right to maintain their own religion).<sup>41</sup> Van Slingelandt pointed out the contradictions inherent in Article 36 ('On the magistracy') of the Belgic Confession, which dated from 1561. Article 36 demands that the government 'suppress and exterminate all idolatry and false religion, and destroy the reign of Antichrist (. . .)'. This article is as intolerant as it is illogical, observed Van Slingelandt. How could Calvinists have compelled the government (such as the Roman Catholic regime of Philip II) to enforce the decisions of the Reformed clergy without ascribing to the writers of the Belgic Confession an infallibility which they disputed in the Pope? During the later discussions on predestination, even the 'moderate party' supported the idea of a dominant church, giving the right to determine public doctrine to the civil authorities. This position was, again, a glaring contradiction of Reformation principles, which deny all human authority in religious matters. The moderate party only took this unfortunate position because they knew that a majority in the States of Holland favoured the Arminian side of the debate. They simply let interest prevail over principle. In the end, of course, the 'supporters of toleration' were evicted from government, while Remonstrants were forbidden to exercise their faith.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Van Slingelandt, 'Korte aanwijzing', 185-187.

<sup>42</sup> Van Slingelandt, 'Korte aanwijzing', 187-189.



It is clear, noted Van Slingelandt, that the true religion is not helped when the *ius circa sacra* is accorded to the government. Given the contemporary high regard for the theory that the magistracy must prevail over the church, the debate on the rights of subjects and the right of the magistracy in religious matters remains an important one. It is true that the magistracy does not strictly implement existing edicts, but the point is that they have not been revoked either. Since the general peace depends on this issue being properly resolved, Van Slingelandt deemed it helpful to put forward several principles from which the nature of the rights and duties relating to religion could be deduced.<sup>43</sup> He mentioned eight principles. (1) The primary duty of every human being is to prepare himself for eternal salvation by believing and doing what he is supposed to believe and do. (2) What we must believe and do can easily be derived from our relationship with God and our fellow-men, and has been clearly revealed in Scripture. (3) Nobody has an excuse not to know this, since all can make use of the reason given to them for this purpose by God. (4) Nobody is allowed to misuse his ability to reason by following the judgement of another, by taking it upon himself to dominate the beliefs of another, or by forcing another to accept beliefs against his conscience. (5) Everyone has the duty to show his neighbour the way to salvation, insofar as he deems this necessary. (6) Teachers may be elected and gatherings convened at specific times and places. (7) It is a contradiction of reason to give the government control over matters that concern only the relationship between man and God. (8) The government has no authority over the property of any private religious society.

These principles are either so clear and self-evident that they need no proof, or have been amply demonstrated to be true by various writers. These include Samuel Pufendorf (*De habitu Christianae religionis ad vitam civilem*, 1687), Gerard Noodt (*De religione ab imperio libera*, 1706), John Locke (the *Letters concerning toleration*), Matthew Tindal (*The rights of the Christian church asserted*, 1706), and Benjamin Hoadly (his response to critics of his 'Bangorian' sermon on the Kingdom of Christ).<sup>44</sup> Van Slingelandt then discussed the consequences of these principles. First, he considered the rights of subjects, irrespective of

<sup>43</sup> Van Slingelandt, 'Korte aanwijzing', 189–190.

<sup>44</sup> Van Slingelandt, 'Korte aanwijzing', 190–193.

the specific political organization of the state in which they live. He noted that every subject has the right to believe, publicly confess, exercise and pass on anything he believes to be necessary to salvation, as long as the foundations of civil society are not undermined. On these grounds only those who deny God, divine providence and the immortality of the soul may be rejected from civil society. Subjects also have the right to convene, worship together, establish rules and determine a financial arrangement for their society, and oblige all members to abide by the accepted rules, on condition that a member can leave a particular society whenever he so deems fit. Once a society has been established, the members have the right to appoint a number of persons to supervise the maintenance of the rules, and to penalize disobedience with excommunication. The rules that are valid within a society are to be regarded as stipulations in a contract between private individuals; they may not infringe on the right of all subjects to benefit from the general aim of civil society (protection from violence, impartial justice, and so on). The final inference drawn by Van Slingelandt is the most radical one and demonstrates, in contrast to De Beaufort, his consistent republican reasoning. All members of civil society have the right—regardless of their religious views—to participate in the political administration or to hold office in the judiciary, as long as the person in question has the required talents, birth, and wealth. Excluded from participation, however, are those who maintain that political or public office requires a personal badge of orthodoxy. The refusal to allow dissenting believers to participate in public administration is but one step removed from coercion of conscience. By contrast, to throw open public administration to all capable individuals, and thus to make earnest with the claim that religion has nothing to do with material benefits, is a certain way of safeguarding the eventual prevalence of the true faith.<sup>45</sup>

Such are the rights of subjects. What, then, are the duties and powers of the magistracy? First, the magistracy must maintain the civil rights and freedoms of all subjects living within a particular territory. Secondly, the religious congregations of dissenters should be tolerated. Thirdly, in judicial or political administration the services are to be used only of such persons who reject coercion of conscience, who believe that all subjects have an equal right to the

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<sup>45</sup> Van Slingelandt, 'Korte aanwijzing', 193–196.

benefits of civil society, and who do not regard orthodoxy as a condition for political competence. Fourthly, the magistracy has to make sure that the right to association is not misused as a means to disturb the common peace. Thus, official commissioners must be able to attend religious meetings, while suspect or rebellious leaders ought to be removed. The magistracy is entitled to force into exile all those who undermine the foundations of civil society.<sup>46</sup> In conclusion, Van Slingelandt reiterated his argument by commenting on the meaning of Isa. 49:23 ('And kings shall be thy nursing fathers'). He insisted that the passage means that the magistracy is obliged to protect the Christian Church in general, and not one particular confession.<sup>47</sup> In a short supplement to his essay, Van Slingelandt rejected out of hand the arguments adduced by Hugo Grotius in *De imperio summarum potestatum circa sacra* (1647), in support of magisterial power.<sup>48</sup>

There is no clear evidence that Van Slingelandt's straightforward defence of religious liberty and diversity had any influence in the eighteenth century, though the fact that the manuscript remained unpublished does not necessarily imply that it was unknown. Van Slingelandt's *Political writings* had circulated among *regenten* for almost half a century before they were published in 1784–1785.<sup>49</sup> Nonetheless, it should be clear that while early eighteenth-century magisterial views on the ideal nature of the public church ranged from orthodox Calvinist to latitudinarian, they shared the same assumptions regarding the relations between politics and religion. These assumptions reflected acceptance of the confessional public. Van Slingelandt's account was the most radical in that he pleaded for far-reaching religious leniency within the state church and for unqualified toleration without; significantly, however, his commentary remained unpublished.

## 5.2 VISIONS OF CONCORD IN RHYME

There was a time when the Dutch were fond of singing the virtues of concord, peace and toleration in lengthy didactic verse. Throughout

<sup>46</sup> Van Slingelandt, 'Korte aanwijzing', 196–197.

<sup>47</sup> Van Slingelandt, 'Korte aanwijzing', 198–200.

<sup>48</sup> Van Slingelandt, 'Korte aanwijzing', 200–202. Van Dam, 'De imperio summarum potestatum circa sacra'.

<sup>49</sup> S. van Slingelandt, *Staatkundige geschriften*, Amsterdam 1784–1785.

the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, poetry was an attractive means to disseminate all kinds of ideas. It would be difficult to find a Dutch intellectual who did not joyfully contribute to the vast heaps of paper churned out annually on the Batavian Parnassus. The verse of only a few Dutch poets will be reviewed in this section. A brief discussion of Hugo Grotius, Joost van den Vondel, and Gerard Brandt will provide some background to an interesting Dutch tradition.

Hugo Grotius (1583–1645) is important to the history of religious concord and liberty in the Netherlands in several qualities—as a lawyer and theologian, but also as a poet. Though one of the most famous advocates of church union, his reputation among the eighteenth-century Dutch was based mostly on his skill as a legal scholar and a philologist, his neo-Latin poetry, his letters, and his exegetical views. Grotius, moreover, was a testimony to Dutch national greatness in an incurably patriotic age, as excellent an advertisement of the Dutch spirit as heroic men like Piet Hein (who captured the Spanish silver fleet in 1628) and Michiel de Ruyter (who in 1667 had sailed right up the Thames and devastated the English fleet). Stemming from a leading family, Grotius was destined to become a ranking magistrate in the young Republic. During the controversies over Arminianism, he sided with the States party led by Oldenbarnevelt. He was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1618, following Maurice's coup d'état. He wrote his famous poem, *Proof of the true religion*, in jail, and after his escape in 1621 translated it into Latin prose as *De veritate religionis Christianae* (1627).

Grotius' poem was immensely popular throughout the early modern period; copies were available in Latin, Dutch, English, French, and German. In the eighteenth century, two Dutch versions were to be had, one edited by Gerard Brandt,<sup>50</sup> the other by Jean le Clerc, who provided the best critical edition in 1709.<sup>51</sup> Less known internationally were the 39 stanzas of Grotius' 'Complaint concerning divided Christendom'. This poem was appended with other shorter poems to Brandt's editions of the *The truth of the Christian religion*. In a foreword, Brandt praised the memory of Grotius, that outstanding man of peace whose poem ought to contribute to the restoration of religious concord and charity. In his poem Grotius himself

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<sup>50</sup> First published in 1683; I have used the fifth edition: *Beweys van den waren godsdienst* (1728).

<sup>51</sup> See section 4.2. above.

prayed to God, to ‘Graciously heal/The broken pieces/Of the Christian Church.’ Brandt, too, wrote a long poem on the topic called *The peaceable Christian* (c. 1664), included in the editions of Brandt’s *Poetry* which still continued to appear in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>52</sup> *The peaceable Christian* presented an apology for Christian concord in the tradition of Erasmus and Grotius, offering clouds of witnesses ranging from Cyprian and Erasmus to Junius and Pareus.

This tradition of irenicist verse was sustained in the eighteenth century. One particularly striking instance was a long and unwieldy didactic poem published anonymously in 1739. Filling more than a hundred pages in quarto, it was somewhat clumsily called *Preparation for true worship, free from coercion of conscience*.<sup>53</sup> The poem was richly annotated with erudite comments on the issues discussed, as well as on linguistic purity. The writer claimed to have read law at Leiden under Gerard Noodt, and it is evident from his poem that he was versed in classical literature and acquainted with theological writing. It is also apparent that he belonged to one of the early eighteenth-century literary circles which took the seventeenth-century poet Joost van den Vondel as an authority on Dutch spelling and grammar. A good candidate for the poem’s authorship is Pieter van der Schelling (1691–1751). As an Arminian, Van der Schelling studied theology at the Remonstrant Seminary under Van Limborch and Le Clerc. He worked as a preacher for more than a decade before resigning from the ministry in 1725. Earlier he had married the daughter of a wealthy civil servant, Cornelis van Alkemade (1654–1737), with whom he collaborated after his resignation in writing historical works. This is probably the reason why he began to read law at Leiden in 1721. Van der Schelling belonged to a literary circle at Rotterdam called *Natura et arte*, whose members wrote poetry and were notorious sticklers for grammatical purity. Fellow members included Cornelis Westerbaen, the Lutheran critic of Joan van den Honert, and Frans de Haes (1708–1761), a wealthy cotton trader who wrote funeral songs for the Arminian professors Van Cattenburgh (1743) and Wettstein (1754).<sup>54</sup> Van der Schelling is not the only possible can-

<sup>52</sup> Van Eijnatten, ‘Lodestars of Latitude’; G. Brandt, *Poezy* (1727), II, 163–240. The title was probably derived from the original French version of Junius’ *Eirenicum de pace ecclesiae catholicae inter Christianos*, called *Le paisible Chrestien* (1593).

<sup>53</sup> [Anon.], *Voorbereiding tot den waaren godsdienst, vry van geuwetensdwang* (1739).

<sup>54</sup> Other members were Dirk Smits (1702–1752), a civil servant, and Nicolaes Versteeg (1704–1773), a wealthy tradesman. Members of the circle together wrote

didate. Others are Adriaan Spinneker (1676–1754), a Mennonite who studied under Van Limborch and who is purported to have written a 122-page poem in defence of Stinstra in 1743;<sup>55</sup> and Pieter Merkman (1699–1760), a businessman who frequented Remonstrant meetings and wrote verse, among others in praise of Venema.<sup>56</sup>

Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679), for *Natura et arte* a principal literary authority, did not just provide linguistic standards. He was utterly unconventional from a religious point of view. From Mennonite stock, he turned to Arminianism via Calvinism, and ended his days as a Roman Catholic. He was, moreover, one of the most politically minded poets of the seventeenth century. He habitually sided with the States-oriented factions at Amsterdam and opposed the Calvinist establishment. His satirical poems were inspired by the triumph of Dort in 1619 and the execution of Holland's Grand Pensionary Johan van Oldenbarnevelt.<sup>57</sup> Vondel did not mince words. One of his best-known lampoons was an attack on orthodox Calvinism, in which he dispensed with predestination under the title *Decretum horribile*. A classical tragedy that referred directly to Van Oldenbarnevelt's trial, *Palamedes, or murdered innocence* (1625), led to the 'prince of poets' being prosecuted and severely penalized by the government. Gerard Brandt instigated the publication of broadsheets containing Vondel's anti-Calvinist satires in 1647. In the early eighteenth century, the publisher Pieter Brakman reissued them together with *Palamedes* itself. These editions included Brandt's annotations, as well as comments by someone familiar with Arnold's *Kirchen- und Ketzergeschichte*.<sup>58</sup> Persons who held strong views on religious liberty, then, had an interest in propagating Vondel's verse. Even in the later eighteenth century the attempts of a literary society to commemorate Vondel were still not appreciated,<sup>59</sup> while the editor of Vondel's complete works, published in 1793, was, significantly, a frustrated radical democrat.<sup>60</sup>

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poems in praise of the Dutch edition (1743) of Trotz's *De libertate sentiendi dicendique jurisconsultis propria* (see section 5.5 below).

<sup>55</sup> [Anon.], *De vryheid op den troon gezet* [*Liberty placed on its throne*] [1743]; see Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 85–86.

<sup>56</sup> Merkman organized a literary circle at his home in Haarlem which included Westerbaen, Alberti, and Spinneker.

<sup>57</sup> Bostoën, 'Vondels hekeldichten'.

<sup>58</sup> J. van den Vondel, *Palamedes of vermoorde onnozelheit* (1707).

<sup>59</sup> *NB* 1775-i, 318–329, on the society *Diligentiae omnia*.

<sup>60</sup> J. van den Vondel, *Alle de werken* (1793); the editor was Bernard Bosch (see section 5.7).

The introduction to *Preparation for true worship* made abundantly clear why the poem was published anonymously. The author addressed his poem to

all unbiased Christians who accept God's Word as their only rule of faith and conduct, who wish to be named after no particular teacher or sect, although by no fault of their own they have been divided into, and raised within, different denominations; but who solely wish to be named after Christ as the only infallible teacher, and who are and will remain members of the true universal Christian church.<sup>61</sup>

The Hobbesian-Lockean (and, for that matter, Collegiant) restriction of the essence of Christianity to belief in Christ as an infallible teacher puts the author among early critics like Drieberge and Stinstra.<sup>62</sup> The poet's aim was religious concord. God, he noted, will end discord in his own time, but until then Christians themselves must seek to end 'the affliction of Joseph' (Amos 6:6). They should recognize that, in spite of being separated physically in visible churches, they all belong to the one universal church, that Christ is their only teacher, and that he tolerates error only, not schism. The poet argued that his distinction between visible churches and the one invisible church is in perfect conformity with orthodox Calvinist views, and proved this by referring to Walaeus and Calvin.<sup>63</sup> No reasonable Calvinist could object to his argument, the poet implied. The poem opens with a conventional description of coercion of conscience as a terrible monster.<sup>64</sup> The various attributes of this monster are discussed with reference to the literature on tyranny and religious coercion. These range from *De tyrannide papae in reges et principes christianos diascepsis* (1649) by the Swedish-Dutch jurist Laurentius Banck († 1662) to Bayle's *Commentaire philosophique sur ces paroles de Jesus-Christ, contraindres d'entrer; ou Traité de la tolerance universelle* (1686), and John Toland's letter on the druids.<sup>65</sup> The poet intended to slay his monster with the help of Truth, Reason and Worship—for as Grotius said, all

<sup>61</sup> [Anon.], *Voorbereiding tot den waaren godsdienst*, introduction.

<sup>62</sup> See section 4.2 above.

<sup>63</sup> A. Walaeus, *Operum* (1647), vol. I, 455 ('*Invisibilis, dicitur Ecclesia illa, quae constat tantum ex vere credentibus & electis*'); and J. Calvin, *Institutio*, IV, i, § 7. There are also references to Franciscus Gomarus, the Dutch Counter-Remonstrant; the Huguenot Pierre Ravanel († c. 1680); and Heinrich Moller (1530–1589), a Lutheran theologian from Melancthon's school.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 283.

<sup>65</sup> [Anon.], *Voorbereiding tot den waaren godsdienst*, 2–16.

have the duty to withstand coercion of conscience. The poem itself was a 'preparatory' step towards a more inclusive poem (which the author never wrote) on uncoerced religious worship, in which all things useless and discordant would have no place.

Citing Turretini Jr., the poet stated that it was his aim to unify the churches. Ecclesiastical union is possible, but not on the idle presumption that unity of sentiment can be achieved. 'Mutual Patience' is the term used most by the poet, by which he meant the love we show towards those who disagree with us, a love that does not encroach on individual liberty and yet enables religious concord. The poet claimed that the Dutch Republic was a land where some churches already practised the duty of 'mutual Patience.' These churches considered no religious authority to be infallible, accepting neither Pope nor synod but only the commandments of God's Son as their rule of faith and conduct. They inquired freely into the different confessions of faith, forbore errant Christians, maintained church unity 'through Shiloh's bond of Peace', and followed the lead of the exemplary early church.<sup>66</sup> Having elaborately stated his aims, the poet described a vision to which he suddenly became a party. The vision concerns a suit between Piety and Interest. The point at issue is the question whether truth must be professed at all costs, or whether it is better to dissemble (as Drieberge's Nicodemists did) in order to obtain political favour, make profit or simply avoid trouble. Piety claims that it is best to follow God's Word and one's own convictions, but acknowledges that the pursuit of God's approval, rather than the world's, may result in loss of honour. Interest responds with several historical examples. Look at the problems Erasmus encountered when he published Valla's commentary on the New Testament, or the discussions resulting from Robert Étienne's translation of the Bible. Those who seek peace, concludes Interest, should not reveal themselves, but conform to the established faith. Piety counters Interest's claim in a lengthy monologue, interrupted at one point by an ignorant, impassioned and uncontrolled crowd symbolizing the prejudiced masses who adhered blindly to the doctrines of public churches. Naturally, Piety disagrees with Interest. People must stand firm for the truth. He mentions Samuel Clarke, who claimed 'that wickedness and ungoverned lust are the only causes of obstinate

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<sup>66</sup> [Anon.], *Voorbereiding tot den waaren godsdienst*, 25-29.



infidelity'. Christians suffer when they imitate Christ. Their goal is truth, and truth is eternal while coercion is not. Besides, suppression of the truth will often lead to its triumph. The Reformation is a prime example of this. In England and the Netherlands, suppression led to the Bible being accepted as the only rule of faith and conduct. Locke wrote his *Letter on toleration* for Christians who accept this rule. Such Christians grant freedom of conscience to all, and do not quarrel about *non necessaria*. Still addressing the court, Piety notes that it is necessary to search the truth and to follow one's conscience, and that this is conducive to public welfare. He adorns his point with references to Jean le Clerc as well as the republican theorist De Beaufort.<sup>67</sup>

The counsels' arguments having been completed, the court is suddenly visited by an Angel who lectures the audience on how to inquire into the truth. The poet used the benevolent spirit's plea to add notes containing references to, among others, Ostervald, Clarke, and Addison and Steele's *Spectator*. Christians, contends the Angel, should not follow the decisions of men, but stick to the Bible only. They should try to be impartial, and differentiate between what is necessary and what is useful. Uncontrolled zealotry will lead only to misery. It is best to keep to the golden mean in unresolved matters. In any case, the true characteristic of orthodoxy is a well-founded faith, based not on ecclesiastical authority but on Scripture. Intruding into the poem itself, the poet realizes that if he is to write his grand poem on true and uncoerced religious worship, he must himself evince a pure love for God and the truth, and dare to repudiate prejudice, passion, authority, zealotry, habit, fashion, fear, and expectations of loss or profit. Let us therefore found the 'true, and Universal Church', named not after the sects but after Christ: a Christian church and an invisible one, unconfined to time or place, to which all true Christendom belongs.<sup>68</sup>

In the final section the poet attempted to integrate his vision of a universal church with the republican political tradition represented by the writers discussed in the previous section, and evidenced by various government rescripts. In the United Provinces, he claimed,

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<sup>67</sup> [Anon.], *Voorbereiding tot den waaren godsdienst*, 30–57. Extensive quotations from J. le Clerc, *Quaestiones Hieronymianae* (1700) 49; and De Beaufort's *Verhandeling van de vryheit*.

<sup>68</sup> [Anon.], *Voorbereiding tot den waaren godsdienst*, 57–72.

religious worship, in accordance with the law of nations, had always been free from princely tyranny and coercion of conscience by ecclesiastical authorities. No one was required to give account of his faith, since the civil authorities themselves had always regarded the Bible as the only rule of faith and had never bound anybody to any man-made rule. Averse to tyranny, the secular authorities demanded that their subjects indulge one another in speculative matters to nurture the general peace. They repeatedly declared that doctrines ought not to be the cause of aggrivement. The authorities had always followed the lead of God and punished no one who obeys his own conscience, as Everard Otto (1686–1756) claimed.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, the poet continued, in this land the clergy is kept in check. Referring to an address by Barbeyrac, he opposed clericalism and disputed the clergy's interference in politics.<sup>70</sup> In short, he concluded, freedom of religion had the best chance of surviving in the Netherlands, since this land was founded on true freedom. De Beaufort and Le Clerc showed that in this free republic people dared 'to speak out freely in favour of the rights of all churches;' it was a land raised from the void by the hand of God, to the wonderment of Europe.

Apart from several references to De Beaufort, of whose praise for the free Dutch Republic he made adroit use, the poet refers to the Dutch translation of *Cato's letters: or essays on liberty, civil and religious, and other important subjects*. Published anonymously in the *London Journal* between 1720 and 1723, these letters constituted a republican attack on Whig political views. The letters castigated corruption, ambition and factiousness, a critique they combine with the characteristic republican appeal to freedom and virtue. As a remedy to the corrupting patronage of the court, *Cato's letters* accorded the people a constitutional role meant to ensure that members of the House of Commons truly represented the electorate.<sup>71</sup> *Cato's letters* were immediately translated into Dutch in 1722, possibly because they discussed the causes and effects of the financial enterprise of 1719–1720 known

<sup>69</sup> E. Otto, *Primae lineae notitiae rerum publicarum* (1726), VI, § xxix. Otto was a respected law professor at Utrecht between 1720 and 1739, inaugurating at Utrecht with *De iure imperatoris et statuum imperii circa sacra*. He wrote a commentary on Pufendorf and dedicated his writings to Thomasius, Noodt and Bynkershoek. William IV attended his lectures on constitutional law.

<sup>70</sup> See section 5.5 below.

<sup>71</sup> The authors were John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon; both supported Hoadly in the Bangorian controversy. See Hamowy, 'Cato's Letters'.

as the South Sea Bubble. Following the fifth English edition, the book was again translated in the 1750s, this time probably as a warning against the growth of princely power in the Republic.<sup>72</sup> Our poet referred in particular to a passage in *Cato's letters* concerning freedom of speech. The example of the ancient Romans shows that proper government is impossible without the freedom of the people or their representatives to examine affairs of state, and openly to pronounce judgement. Freedom of speech guarantees the land's liberty and is the scourge of traitors and oppressors. The admirable privilege of speaking and writing freely should therefore be defended and encouraged to the utmost.<sup>73</sup> A third republican authority, next to De Beaufort and *Cato's letters*, is the jurist Gerard Noodt, the poet's 'Teacher', who also pleaded for religious freedom.<sup>74</sup> The poet wished to affirm and extend Noodt's plea, again embellishing his verse with clouds of witnesses. For instance, with the Dutch physicist Petrus Musschenbroek (1692–1761) he spoke of the freedom of inquiry 'which behoves a righteous and free Batavian, and lover, seeker and confessor of truth'. With Richard Steele's *Guardian*, he observed that such liberty is quite different from libertinism. And with Locke, he noted that freedom of inquiry implies the use of reasonable arguments.<sup>75</sup>

The *Preparation for true worship* should be associated with the 'Clarkean' circle surrounding dissenters like Drieberge and Stinstra. Rejecting deist freethinking, the poet defended freedom of thought, reduced the fundamentals to simple faith in Christ the Messiah, passionately rejected subscription, opposed clerical authority, and, in tune with the Dutch republican tradition, praised religious liberty and moderate government as aspects of 'true freedom'. A later instance of anti-clericalism in rhyme is a poem called *The church under the cross, or a mirror of coercion of conscience* (1757, but published in 1776), by Pieter Leuter, an energetic member of several poetry societies whose poetic

<sup>72</sup> See Klein, *Patriots Republikanisme*, 72–73. In the 1780s an anthology from *Cato's letters* were published in a political journal.

<sup>73</sup> D.tr. [Trenchard and Gordon], *Brieven door een voornaam Lord (. . .) op den naam van Cato geschreeven* (1722), 130–143 (Letter XII).

<sup>74</sup> On Noodt, see section 5.5 below.

<sup>75</sup> P. Musschenbroek, *Beginselen der natuurkunde [Principles of natural philosophy]* (1736), preface; Musschenbroek, who is talking about science rather than theology, claims that he is not a sectarian, but pursues the truth for its own sake. *De Guardian of de Britsche Zedenmeester* (trans. by P. le Clercq), vol. III (1731), discourse 24, 203. The poet refers to Locke's preface in the *Essay concerning human understanding*.

talents were not, however, proportional to his enthusiasm.<sup>76</sup> The poem is a rather repetitive account in which descriptions of concord are alternated by images of dissension, and the clergy are continuously rebuked for their clericalism and their intolerance. Leuter had evidently read Gerard Brandt's *Peaceable Christian*, for he cited exactly the same authorities, including Erasmus, Bucer, Junius, Pierre du Moulin, and Grotius; he added his own references to Vondel and Gottfried Arnold. Yet another example of anticlerical poetry—these were not difficult to find in a nation given to verse—is afforded by Jan de Kruijff (1753–1821). This Patriot, merchant and member of various societies sang in praise of a universal church, comprising the followers of Calvin, Luther, Arminius, Menno, and Socinus.<sup>77</sup> Evidently, poetry, especially when lavishly annotated, was considered an excellent medium through which to express republican ideals combining notions of 'true freedom' with anticlerical pleas for religious liberty. The poems we have discussed are comparable to the Dutch translations of English and Swiss writings,<sup>78</sup> in that they functioned as a means of articulating opposition to orthodox confessional control of the public sphere, by citing latitudinarian authorities.

### 5.3 PHILOSOPHERS' FELICITY

Critics of the organized clergy were often professionally schooled in law (and sometimes medicine),<sup>79</sup> or exhibited a suspicious predilection for controversial philosophy. In the early modern period, the two major anticlerical 'schools' of philosophy and law advertised blueprints for an ideal state, in which the clergy were at best accorded a role subservient to the state. Philosophers often tended to draw on Spinoza, especially in the early part of the century. Their writings occupied a niche among critical, self-educated laymen and free-thinkers, whose often cheap and anonymous publications, frequently

<sup>76</sup> P. Leuter, *De kruiskerk, of spiegel van gewetensdwang* (1776).

<sup>77</sup> *Gedichten van Jan de Kruijff* (1776), 52–53; cf. a poem praising Schultens (38–51). Arnold Hoogvliet (1687–1763), a poetic accountant held in high regard by his contemporaries, railed against traditional theological system in a poem on 'Holy zeal', included in his *Mengeldichten [Miscellaneous verse]* (1738), 461–488.

<sup>78</sup> See section 4.2 above.

<sup>79</sup> On Herman Boerhaave (1669–1738) and his aversion to theological dispute, see Cunningham, 'Medicine to calm the mind.'

projecting visions of the ideal libertarian state in alien civilizations, ensured a connection with the reading public. The other 'school' was usually concerned with natural law. These writers frequently had an academic background, and were generally very thorough in making clear that the prerogatives claimed by the clergy and the church were not borne out by the state of nature. Though both schools were quite distinct, they could of course overlap. This section and the next will be devoted to 'Spinozism' in a broad sense; two later sections will be concerned with the natural law tradition. The present section will discuss Spinoza himself, Bernard Mandeville, several minor Dutch Spinozists, Frederik van Leenhof, and Willem Deurhoff.

Any history of Dutch republican thought in relation to religion should at least mention Benedict Spinoza (1632–1677). The excommunicated Jew and glass grinder is generally regarded as one of the first theorists to develop a 'modern' view of intellectual liberty. He is often contrasted to defenders of religious freedom such as Locke, who stopped far short of granting citizens the unqualified freedom to say whatever they wished to say in any area of thought.<sup>80</sup> Spinoza fleshed out a fully secular justification of, not just religious liberty, but freedom of thought. His notion of *libertas philosophandi* addressed a much larger issue than religious toleration alone. The *Tractatus theologico-politicus* was, if anything, a manifesto for freethinking and open anticlericalism. Spinoza made a point of emphasizing that large congregations of any sect should be forbidden so that they would not compete with the impressive and magnificent temples belonging to the state religion. The official religion was not Christian, but a universalist one. Its rites were performed not by a specific clergy but by the political rulers of the republic. All other churches and especially their clergies were to be kept on a short leash by the magistracy, in order to prevent the development of an independent power within the state to which the common multitudes were bound to pledge their loyalty. Spinoza's attempt to prohibit the formation of powerful ecclesiastical structures and institutions was characteristic of much republican discourse in the Netherlands. The writings of, among others, Lambert van Velthuysen and Johan and Pieter de la Court

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<sup>80</sup> E.g. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*; Laursen, 'Spinoza on Toleration', emphasizing 'ambivalences, tensions, and contradictions' in Spinoza's thought.

reveal similar traits;<sup>81</sup> in their emphasis on state control, they may be seen as so many radical versions of the confessional public sphere.

The *Free thoughts on religion, the church, and national happiness* (1720) by the Dutch-English physician Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733) was evidently a product of what seems like a boom in libertarian writings during the 1720s and 1730s. The French translation by the Dutch publicist Justus van Effen, which appeared in 1722, was reissued in 1723, 1729, and 1738 (he was mentioned as the translator only in the last edition, when he himself was dead); a Dutch edition appeared (translator unknown) in 1722, and a German one in 1726. Mandeville's *Free thoughts* are manifestly anticlerical ('priestcraft' is a recurring theme) and universalist, if not supremely indifferent to, and critical of, religion altogether. Mandeville avowed that he made 'great Use' of Pierre Bayle, and had no objections to atheists, since they were generally very peaceful people. He intended to demonstrate that 'the most difficult part of our Religion consists in conquering our Passions' and to prove that Christians cannot hate others (including Muslims and heathens) 'upon any Religious Account whatever'.<sup>82</sup> His 'Aim is Peace and Union' in the 'National Church'. Discussing the Trinity, he shrewdly admitted nothing but undermined the doctrine effectively:

I deny nothing of what our Church asserts concerning this Mystery, without judging uncharitably of others for refusing to comply with every Syllable of the *Athanasian* Creed. I touch on the Credulity of the Ignorant, I diswade from dogmatising in Matters of Faith, and the Inhumanity of Imposing upon one another Creeds of Humane Invention: Since the Holy Scripture must be the sole Rule of Faith, and every one at last must judge for himself.

Mandeville was intent on attacking 'the Priest-ridden superstitious Bigot, who shuts his Eyes to common Sense, and stupidly imagines, that he can believe plain Contradictions.' Predestination too is incomprehensible, and therefore a fitting 'Subject for the exercise of Humility and Tolleration.' Mandeville condemned the vulgar crowd for its veneration of the institutional church and ascribes no 'less Fondness for Power and Dominion' to Protestant clergymen as to Roman priests. He accused the clergy in general of breeding ignorance and

<sup>81</sup> On Velthuysen, see section 3.4 above.

<sup>82</sup> B. Mandeville, *Free thoughts on religion, the church, and national happiness* (1720), 'Preface', i–xix.

superstition and performing other acts of 'Priestcraft, pious Frauds, Calumnies and downright Falsities.' Mandeville assailed the Protestant tendency towards schism and the aversion of the Protestant clergy to reunion.<sup>83</sup> He claimed that all national churches were in favour of persecution, whether they be Roman, Lutheran or Calvinist. He argued strongly for an Erastian policy vis-à-vis the church, as a means to keep the clergy under control and prevent dissension. He observed, finally, that monarchical power was bound to a contract. This was heady stuff. No wonder Mandeville's Dutch translator was wholly noncommittal, adding no preface, no comments, and no annotations.<sup>84</sup>

Mandeville's view that differences of opinion could do no harm as long as the clergy was held firmly in check has been called 'a strikingly Spinozistic sentiment.'<sup>85</sup> Although such views can be found in many eighteenth-century anticlerical writings, and it is not always certain that they were Spinozist, the Spinozism in Mandeville's *Free thoughts* should come as no surprise. Spinozism was, after all, a Dutch heresy, and if the reports of divines are to be given credence, there were Spinozists enough at large in the Dutch Republic.<sup>86</sup> Attachment to Spinoza's philosophy was almost a more heinous crime than adherence to Socinianism, and it is only natural that the 'Spinozists' of the early eighteenth-century should deny any connection with a system of ideas publicly denounced by the academy, the church, and the magistracy.<sup>87</sup> As late as 1760, Amsterdam magistrates fined a bookseller 300 guilders for putting Spinoza's *Opera posthuma* on the

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<sup>83</sup> Mandeville, *Free thoughts on religion*, 200–202, referring to 'wise Princes, and able Statesmen' who were hindered by the clergy. Supporters of union, including John Dury and Jacob Acontius have been branded as traitors. He quoted Jurieu, *De pace ineunda*, saying 'that the business of the reunion ought to be principally committed to secular Persons, and not to Ecclesiasticks', since the clergy will only dispute among each other; the decisions at a synod intending to achieve peace should be presided over by 'Political Judges'.

<sup>84</sup> D.tr. B. Mandeville, *Onpartydige gedachten over de godsdienst, de kerk en des volks geluk* (1723).

<sup>85</sup> Israel, *Locke, Spinoza and the philosophical debate concerning toleration*, 7.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. Nicolaas Hartman, *De bedriegelyke filosoof ontdekt uit de nagelaten werken van Benedictus de Spinoza* [*The treacherous philosopher uncovered in the posthumous works of Benedict Spinoza*] (1724). Cf. also the anonymous tract titled 'The politics of freethinkers in respect of religion and ecclesiastics', included in C. Tuinman, *Het helsche gruwelgeheim der heillooze vrygeesten* [*The hellish, horrible secret of wicked freethinkers*] (1717), 265–327. Carolus Tuinman (1659–1728), an orthodox Voetian, associated the tract with Hattemism and mystical passivity, and drew parallels with Spinoza's writings.

<sup>87</sup> M.J. Petry, 'Behmenism and Spinozism', 128–129.

market.<sup>88</sup> Telltale signs of the relatively rare (or adequately hidden) Spinozism of the period include the rejection of Christian morality and a virulent anticlericalism. Happiness is attainable only when the yoke of the theologians has been shattered, claimed 'Spinozistic' authors of whom it is far from certain that they had actually read Spinoza at all. Nonetheless, these minor philosophers and theologians were perceived as a significant threat to the established religious order in the Netherlands. They caused an uproar precisely because they succeeded in transferring the Spinozist heresy from the recondite geometry and academic prose of Spinoza's philosophical treatises to the popular level. They were deemed subversive, and hence important enough, to be rejected resoundingly, not only by the Dutch clerisy, including a large number of clergymen, but also by distinguished German writers ranging from Johann Georg Walch to Jakob Brücker. The intensity of refutation in Germany and the Netherlands seems an indication of the popularity gained by simplified 'Spinozism' among broader sections of the populace.<sup>89</sup>

The precise course followed by 'Spinozism' in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Netherlands is still to be charted. This is notoriously difficult, given the fact that Spinozism thrived almost exclusively in clandestine subcultures. Jan van der Meer (1639–1686), for example, was a Leiden *regent* who corresponded with Spinoza and probably prepared some of the philosopher's writings for the press; but he carefully, and successfully, concealed his identity.<sup>90</sup> The court preacher of Amalia van Solms (the wife of Stadtholder Frederick Henry), Petrus van Balen (1643–1690), was influenced deeply by Spinoza, but this did not become known until the 1980s.<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile, the legal action against Adriaan Koerbagh (c. 1632–1669) in 1668 had been an adequate deterrent to all would-be Spinozists. Koerbagh had devised a notorious combination of democratic ideas, anti-Trinitarian thought and sexual liberality; he was convicted and died in prison.<sup>92</sup> Rabid anticlericalism surfaced in the writings of Eric

<sup>88</sup> *Jongelenen* no. 67.

<sup>89</sup> Schröder, "... Spinozam tota armenta in Belgio sequi ducem". On the general Lutheran background, see also Sparn, 'Formalis Atheus?', who argues that ruptures in the philosophical and theological foundations of orthodox Protestant thought were brought to light by the threat of the Spinozan heresy.

<sup>90</sup> Petry, 'Behmenism and Spinozism', 128.

<sup>91</sup> Van den Hoven ed., *Petrus van Balen*.

<sup>92</sup> Hubbeling, 'Zur frühen Spinozarezeption', 152–155.



Walten (1663–1697), an obscure pamphleteer with a record of trespasses ranging from vagabondage to sacrilege, the latter leading to his death in prison while awaiting trial. Around 1690 he not only defended popular sovereignty and electoral monarchy, but also strongly supported the rights of the civil authorities over the church. Walten, having already perpetrated the unforgivable crime of appealing to the Spinozist doctrine of accommodation, added fuel to the flames of orthodox inquisition by denouncing the Reformed synod which dismissed Balthasar Bekker in August 1692 as a madhouse, and, even worse, slandering the clergy as a Satanist sect. He was incarcerated in 1694 and possibly committed suicide in his cell a few years later.<sup>93</sup>

Verifiable Spinozists surfaced now and again in the decades around 1700. Antony van Dalen (1644–after 1710)<sup>94</sup> studied theology at Leiden and was later reputed, not only to have denied the Trinity, but also to have adhered to a philosophical naturalism of a decidedly Spinozist nature. He regarded both the Bible and the Reformed confessions as vulgar writings, and restricted the accessibility of true philosophy to a learned elite. He was involved in one of the Dutch translations of the *Tractatus* and probably also in the publication of the most infamous Spinozist tracts produced by Amsterdam Spinozist circles, the *Philopater* novels (1691 and 1697). These novels ridicule the Reformed clergy, both Voetians and Cocceians, describing the intellectual pilgrimage of a Calvinist theology student from abstruse dogma to Spinozist philosophy.<sup>95</sup> Hendrik Wyermars (born in 1685) published an *Imagined chaos* in 1710, which resulted in a sentence of 15 years and his (probable) death in prison.<sup>96</sup> Wyermars was a self-educated clerk who appears to have read extensively in Descartes and Spinoza, among many others. In his coherent and explosive bestseller, Wyermars boldly set out to describe the universe in manifestly Spinozistic and deterministic terms. He, too, demoted the status of doctrines like the Trinity to the status of popular truths (that is, necessary errors), and subsequently set about explaining the higher, philosophical ones. Wyermars explained that the established clergy maintained and misused the primitive texts of the Bible to enlarge

<sup>93</sup> Van Bunge, 'Eric Walten'.

<sup>94</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 37–49.

<sup>95</sup> J. Duijkerius, *Het leven van Philopater* (1691/1697); Johannes Duijkerius (1661/2–1702) was a Reformed schoolmaster.

<sup>96</sup> Vandenbossche, 'Hendrik Wyermars' *Ingebeelde chaos* (1710).

their own power, to the detriment of reason. No wonder the penalty laid upon him was particularly severe. The Dutch press kept the Wyermars affair quiet; but in Germany Christoph August Heumann devoted no less than 25 pages to the book in the *Acta Philosophorum*, a review subsequently plundered by later German commentators.

One reason for the virulent attacks by the clergy was the fact that Spinozism gained a following within the ruling patriciate. Van den Honert Sr. still warned against the contamination of young *regenten* in his *Dissertatio de religionis indifferentismo* (1733).<sup>97</sup> Spinozists in turn generally regarded the Cartesio-Cocceians with abhorrence, since they confused theology with philosophy, spurning Spinoza's efforts radically to separate the two areas of thought. The vehement response by the clergy may also be ascribed in part to the fact that Cocceian theology sometimes functioned as a bridge between Calvinist orthodoxy and 'Spinozist' heresy. In *The life of Philopater*, the hero begins as a Voetian pietist preoccupied with personal election, but after experiencing a mental crisis delves into Cocceian theology. He finally ended up as a devotee of Spinoza, whose philosophy he subjects to a thoroughly materialist interpretation. Many so-called pietists and mystics had also originally been Cocceian. Jacob Bril was a Voetian who turned into a Behmenist mystic via Cocceianism. Hence Voetians were often ready to disqualify their Cocceian colleagues as heterodox. The Cocceian divine Johannes Vlak (1657–1690), for instance, was heavily criticized for arguing in his *Eternal Gospel* (*Eewig Evangelium*, 1684) that dissension in the church was the consequence of factiousness and prejudice, and that free inquiry into the Scriptures was a moral obligation.

Apparently, there were even Spinozist currents within the Reformed Church itself.<sup>98</sup> One significant protagonist of clerical Spinozism was Frederik van Leenhof (1647–1712), a Cocceian pastor at Zwolle in the eastern Netherlands. His *Heaven on earth* (1704) caused the first eighteenth-century Spinozist controversy of national dimensions. Despite

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<sup>97</sup> Van den Honert emphasized that indifferentism was especially common among magistrates and academics (apparently the jurists in particular), who put little value on the maintenance of formularies.

<sup>98</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, has dubbed this current 'Reformed Spinozism'. Cf. also Barend Hakvoort († 1735), a teacher of religion at Zwolle and the publisher of several of Van Leenhof's books; he was censured in 1708 in connection with Spinozism, but unlike Van Leenhof (who was higher up in the social hierarchy) he was not supported by the local magistracy.

the attacks by several leading theologians, the local church council, pressured by the civil authorities, protected him until Van Leenhof eventually resigned of his own accord in 1711. It is beyond any doubt that he had read Spinoza closely, if only because he admitted as much himself. The general thrust of *Heaven on earth* is made clear by its subtitle: ‘a concise and clear description of true and enduring felicity: according to reason as well as Holy Scripture, for all kinds of people, and in all situations.’ Although there are evident Spinozist motifs in the book (man, claimed Van Leenhof, is happy when he realizes that everything occurs out of necessity),<sup>99</sup> it is primarily an attack on the superstition and fanaticism induced by melancholy. Van Leenhof’s remedy was similar to Spinoza’s *Ethics*—‘laetitia est hominis transitio a minore ad majorem perfectionem’—but it should be noted that philosophical happiness as an antidote to religious melancholy was becoming a standard recipe in the early eighteenth century.<sup>100</sup>

The pursuit of religious concord figures largely in Van Leenhof’s thought. In a 700-page theological work written prior to his controversial *Heaven on earth*, he had observed that the seventh and final period within the divine economy would be characterized by the exclusive rule of Christ through his Word and Spirit, the healing of vexations, the removal of schisms, the union of sects, and the conversion of all nations. Although it was fairly common in Cocceian commentaries on the end of history to emphasize the final breakthrough of Christian unity, Van Leenhof made a point of emphasizing that during this time ‘the *schism* between the *Lutherans* and the *Reformed* will be healed, and all the *Sects* united’ in the unity of the faith described by Paul (Eph. 4:13).<sup>101</sup> Later, in *Heaven on earth* itself, Van Leenhof transformed the inevitability of the future golden age to a possibility for the present. Having discussed the nature of happiness, he devoted a chapter to ‘The means by which to further true happiness, in relation to Worship and Civil Society’. Religious disunity, Van Leenhof claimed, is caused by the fact that ‘the *simplicity of the universal Religion* is not urged forcefully enough, and its clarity

<sup>99</sup> On such motifs, see Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 51–69.

<sup>100</sup> Schings, *Melancholie und Aufklärung*; Pott, *Aufklärung und Aberglaube*, 267–335. Schröder, “. . . Spinozam tota armenta in Belgio sequi ducem”, 163, notes the parallel between Spinoza and Van Leenhof in this regard.

<sup>101</sup> *De keten der bybelsche godgeleertheit* (1700, 4th ed.), 715–716.

and sufficiency is not revealed to all consciences'. All too often speculative things are emphasized, while they are of little use and do not contribute to piety. The fundamental truths are few in number, as is evidenced by the apostles and the early church. May each believer cultivate this limited ground to his own comfort, he advised, and let his fellow-believer be, so that the obstacles to true felicity and tranquillity of spirit may be removed.<sup>102</sup> Van Leenhof's message was radical enough. A convinced republican, he sharply criticized the public church, where simple believers were subjected to a domineering clergy who asserted their authority by preaching a gospel of despondency. Faith ought to bring about a peaceful moral life filled with happiness. The civil authorities have the duty to maintain a simple universal religion and to ensure felicity by banishing superstition. In this way it will be possible to develop a happy society of 'free Minds', who will have freedom of expression and speech, within the (broad) limits set by religion.<sup>103</sup>

In the ensuing pamphlet war, Van Leenhof was accused of covertly abusing his pulpit to teach Spinozism to the people. One of his harshest critics was the orthodox Cocceian Taco Hajo van den Honert, who did not appreciate the fact that the hard-won supremacy of the Cocceians was being subverted from within the fold. He accused Van Leenhof of attempting to transform theology into a Spinozist natural philosophy and rejected him as a dangerous free-thinker. His objections to Van Leenhof included the latter's implicit contention that one church proffered the truth as much as any other, and that the magistracy held authority over all religious issues.<sup>104</sup> The affair even had international repercussions, which is to say that the Germans got wind of it, not least because an anonymous translator had a German version of *Heaven on earth* published at Amsterdam in 1706. After having visited the Netherlands, the Leipzig philosopher Gottlob Friedrich Jenichen (1680–1735) devoted hundreds of pages to the *Historia Spinozismi Leenhofiani* (1707), and Van Leenhof was honoured with an explicit refutation by no one less than Johann F. Budde.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>102</sup> F. van Leenhof, *Den hemel op aarden; of een korte en klare beschrijvinge van de waare en stantvastige blydschap* (1704), 98–100.

<sup>103</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 59–60; Israel, 'Spinoza, King Salomon and Frederik van Leenhof'; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*, 406–435.

<sup>104</sup> T.H. van den Honert, *Nodige aantekeningen [Necessary comments]* (1705), 31, 108.

<sup>105</sup> Schröder, "... Spinozam tota armenta in Belgio sequi ducem", 164–166.

Another philosopher who must figure in any discussion of the eighteenth-century Dutch toleration debate is Willem Deurhoff (1650–1717). Deurhoff was the self-educated son of an Amsterdam manufacturer of trunks, baskets and cases, a trade he himself continued until 1713.<sup>106</sup> Since the mid-1680s, Deurhoff had held weekly gatherings in which he and his friends discussed philosophical and theological issues, notably the theoretical foundations of natural and revealed theology, and the meaning of certain biblical books and texts. The legality of these meetings was disputed by Taco Hajo van den Honert in a caustic book: *Willem Deurhoff's obstinacy and embarrassment in covering up his wicked sentiments, brought to light by his supposed resolution of objections and [his] prevarications*.<sup>107</sup> The title, characteristically accusing Deurhoff of deceitful secrecy (as opposed to public scrutiny), illustrates the way Deurhoff's popular books were regarded as a threat to the confessional public sphere. Not surprisingly, Van den Honert requested the magistracy to forbid the meetings at Deurhoff's home because he held and propagated erroneous views, particularly on the Trinity.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, in the 1690s the serious accusation of Socinianism had already been levelled at Deurhoff, a dispute ending in his resignation from the Reformed Church.<sup>109</sup> His biographer, Johannes Monnikhoff (1707–1787),<sup>110</sup> a medical practitioner with a critical interest in Spinoza, applied the standard image of the religious dissenter to Deurhoff. In Monnikhoff's description, the Amsterdam merchant was a modest, unassuming and virtuous man who conversed well and vented his opinions candidly. He did not value earthly goods and looked down upon clerics who pursued careers for the sake of wealth, honour and power, or whose hearts had not been touched by what they professed to believe. Monnikhoff

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No Dutch reprint of *Heaven on earth* was attempted; in Germany *Der Himmel auf Erden* appeared again in 1758.

<sup>106</sup> Fix, 'Willem Deurhoff'; Krop, 'Radical cartesianism in Holland'; Severijn, *Spinoza en de gereformeerde theologie zijner dagen*; Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands Cartesianisme*, 222, criticizes Deurhoff for his immoderate overestimation of his own intellectual capabilities.

<sup>107</sup> *Willem Deurhofs hardnekkigheid en verlegenheid, in het bemantelen van sijne heilloose gevoelens, wyt sijne gewaande oplossing van tegenwerpingen en uytvlugten, ontdekt, en aan 't ligt gebragt* (1707).

<sup>108</sup> Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands Cartesianisme*, 213.

<sup>109</sup> Fix, 'Willem Deurhoff,' 162.

<sup>110</sup> Jensen, 'Johannes Monnikhoff'; *NBW* VIII, col. 1170–1171.

also portrays Deurhoff as an ardent States-oriented republican who rejected the princely rule of the Stadtholder.<sup>111</sup>

Six of Deurhoff's philosophical treatises, originally published between 1684 and 1701, were reissued in 1715 in a two-volume *Metaphysical and scriptural system of divinity*. Influenced by Descartes, Spinoza and the occasionalist Arnout Geulincx, Deurhoff developed, in a number of discourses written on the counter of his shop, a theological and philosophical system that frequently excelled in sheer creativity where it fell short in theoretical grounding. He consistently defended a naturalist metaphysics that pictured the world as a self-determining system, in which man and God alike were deprived of free will. Deurhoff's theology is perhaps best characterized by its tendency to eliminate the mysterious. Miracles could be explained by reason, he believed; the Trinity did not consist of a mystical bond between three Persons, but of three manifestations of the one God. Such heretical views attracted a small but loyal following.<sup>112</sup> Deurhovians who disseminated their deterministic faith—God is the cause of everything, and obedience to the law superfluous—were called to order in the 1730s, and there still seem to have been Deurhovians in the Reformed Church as late as the nineteenth century. One of Deurhoff's books, written in his later period when he had become almost blind (probably because of the intricate needlework required by his trade), is a commentary on the second letter of Peter. *The faith, hope, and love of Christians* (concluded in 1712) was intended as a rebuttal of Spinoza, qualified as an atheist for restricting the duration of human consciousness to the short life spent here on earth. In the end, Deurhoff's views amount to unadulterated antinomianism. He contended that 'pitiful man does not understand the things which are of the Spirit.' In his mortal condition, man subsists in a state of drowsiness (*dommeling*) that obstructs the progression of Christ within us. Hence the importance of Peter's second letter, which stresses the need for the godliness 'that results from our partaking of the Divine Nature' (2 Peter 1:4)—a truth that can only be understood properly through true experiential piety.<sup>113</sup> In his exegesis of 2 Peter 1:5–7,

<sup>111</sup> Fix, 'Willem Deurhoff,' 163.

<sup>112</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 87–97.

<sup>113</sup> W. Deurhoff, *Geloove, hoop, en liefde der christenen* (1713), dedication and preface. Deurhoff also emphasizes the need for a purification of the doctrines of the Reformed Church.

Deurhoff predictably discussed brotherhood in terms of the spirit as opposed to the flesh, a brotherhood based on participation in the divine nature and expressed by a strong desire to further our brothers' eternal well-being in unity with God. Unity with God is the perfect expression of love of God, and the highest stage attainable. Deurhoff's discussion of brotherhood concentrates entirely on the distinctions between moral corruption and pure love, sin and perfection, selfhood and godliness, and studiously avoids any comment on the institutional church.<sup>114</sup>

An important episode in the eighteenth-century toleration debate was the legal defence of the editor and publisher of one of Deurhoff's manuscripts. The transcription made by Deurhoff's admirer Monnikhoff comprised some 6,000 pages in folio and contained 394 commentaries on the book of Job made between 1707 and 1717. In 1741, under clandestine circumstances, Deurhoff's close friend Joan van de Velde and the publisher Christiaan Petersen managed to issue a first volume of this text, which appeared as *The example of forbearance under divine tribulations, demonstrated in an exegesis of the Book of Job* (1741).<sup>115</sup> They were working on a second volume when the chief of the Amsterdam police raided the premises, seized all goods and forbade further activities. To justify his actions, the chief of police asked the church council of Amsterdam to advise in the matter. The council judged the book harmless and refused to condemn it. The chief of police thereupon sent it to the theological faculty of Leiden, which pronounced a negative verdict, partly because the book disputed the divinity of Christ (the Stinstra affair was raging in Friesland at that time). Thereupon the Amsterdam bench of aldermen banished Van de Velde from the Province of Holland and fined Petersen 3,000 guilders. The suit was later put before the full court, however, and the Lutheran lawyer Herman Noordkerk (1702–1771) was requested to conduct the defence. In a famous address, he boldly pleaded not guilty on behalf of his clients and procured their acquittal.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Deurhoff, *Geloove, hoope, en liefde der christenen*, 109–126.

<sup>115</sup> W. Deurhoff, *Het voorbeeld van verdraagzaamheid onder de goddelyke bezoeken, ver-toond in de uitlegging en verklaring van het boek Jobs* (1741). Cf. the observation by Joan van de Velde in the preface, that the only intention of the author was to purify the Reformed confessions of unnecessary additions and arbitrary derivations.

<sup>116</sup> The following is largely based on Chr. Sepp, 'Willem Deurhoff en zijne rechts-zaak', in: Idem, *Polemische en irenische theologie. Bijdragen tot hare geschiedenis*, Leiden 1881, 202–242; and De Beneditty, 'De Amsterdamsche Cicero'. Noordkerk was the great-

Noordkerk denounced the irregularity of the judicial procedure, disputed the competence of the Leiden faculty, denied the relevance of existing edicts, exonerated Deurhoff from the accusation of having shown disrespect towards the ecclesiastical and political authorities, and in strongly anticlerical terms condemned persecution in the name of religious truth. As a later biographer observed:

Monsieur NOORDKERK plaidoit avec clarté, avec dignité, & avec force. Il possédoit, à un haut degré, l'art de l'Analyse. Il tiroit, suivant les circonstances, ses principes, du Droit, de l'Equité naturelle, ou de la Religion. (. . .) Son débit étoit tranquille: il ne vouloit qu'éclairer & convaincre l'esprit, & il ne cherchoit jamais à émouvoir les passions que par la force de la vérité.<sup>117</sup>

The chief of police appealed to the court of Holland. Van de Velde and Petersen now chose to submit and settled the matter by promising not to continue printing Deurhoff's book.

Noordkerk was a professional lawyer with a profound knowledge of the privileges, charters and customs of Amsterdam, a man whose skill and competence enjoyed great repute among the authorities themselves. His defence was preserved for posterity in a text written down by an anonymous person present during the hearing, a certain 'Eysbrant Nowhere' ('Eysbrant Nergens').<sup>118</sup> It is clear from the text that 'Eysbrant Nowhere' had connections with the Drieberge-Stinstra circle.<sup>119</sup> It has been suggested that he was an Amsterdam-based trader in stockings called Piet Bakker.<sup>120</sup> This passionate

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grandson of a Lutheran exile forced to flee from Germany; his personal device was 'Spero invidiam & sperno'.

<sup>117</sup> *Eloge de Monsieur l'avocat Noordkerk* (1771), 11–12. The *Eloge* is generally attributed to Jean-Scipion Vernède (1714–1779), a Walloon clergyman in Maastricht and Amsterdam who translated Doddridge into French (Basel 1754; several reissues). Haas and Haas, *La France protestante*, IX, sub Vernède, mention a relative, B. Vernède, 'négociant à Amsterdam', as the writer of the *Eloge*.

<sup>118</sup> *Pleitreden voor Deurhofs Job* [1746?]. Apart from this transcription of Noordkerk's address, a manuscript version by Monnikhoff is known, but this version is dated 1755, some 14 years after the event; the text is quoted extensively in Van Hall, 'Mr. H. Noordkerk'.

<sup>119</sup> The transcriber notes that he used a text published in 1746 by Stinstra's Frisian publisher Folkert van der Plaats. Among others the three diplomatic letters written by the States General to Venice, the Holy Roman Emperor, and the Canton of Berne, are cited with reference to Drieberge's *Vervolg der aanmerkingen* (see section 4.1); see *Pleitreden voor Deurhofs Job*, 33–36.

<sup>120</sup> *NNBW*, IV, col. 79–80. One convincing piece of evidence is that the *Pleitreden voor Deurhofs Job* was included in a collection of writings attributed to P. Bakker, *De doornige roozenkrans* [*Thorny wreath of roses*] (s.a.).



pamphleteer was an admirer of Deurhoff, a critic of all manifestations of high-handed clericalism, and a firm supporter of the liberty to hold any religious belief whatsoever. In 1744, Bakker was so bold as to declare before the church council of Amsterdam that Socinians should not be condemned for their errors. They are Christians, since they consider Jesus to be the Messiah.<sup>121</sup> Having had enough of ecclesiastical meddling (after one particular bout of pamphleteering he was denied admittance to the Lord's Supper), this singular Dutch freethinker left the Reformed Church and apparently turned to deism.<sup>122</sup>

After the 1740s, the appeal of popular Spinozism declined. It is therefore difficult to gauge the influence of Spinozism of a distinctively Dutch variety—above all early eighteenth-century ‘Spinozists’ such as Van Leenhof and Van Deurhoff—on the development of libertarian ideals in the second half of the century. Spinozism and philosophical antinomianism were regarded as plausible, ‘popular’ manifestations of opposition to the confessional public sphere, originating, however, in poorly educated, uncivilized, or otherwise misdirected minds. And with French materialism on the rise, the spokesmen for the polite public certainly took care to distance themselves from any radicalism that smacked of the Spinozist heresy, however much they may have sympathized with the heretics’ obstinate defence of religious liberty.

#### 5.4 KRINKE KESMES AND OTHER MIGHTY COMMONWEALTHS

As noted above, the first two or three decades of the eighteenth century seem to have witnessed an increase in the production of Dutch-language books concerned with religious toleration and liberty. Some of these books contained utopian representations of an ideal commonwealth, and were often intended as incisive critiques of the orthodox public sphere. We shall discuss several such utopian visions in this section, ranging from the famous *Turkish spy* to the Dutch translation of Louis-Sébastien Mercier's *l'An deux mille quatre cent quarante*. We shall, however, focus especially on one remarkable domestic prod-

<sup>121</sup> P. Bakker, *De verlooren arbeyd, en 't gemarteld lidmaatschap* [*Labour lost, and membership martyred*] (1746); this tract is included in *De doornige roozenkrans*.

<sup>122</sup> See section 6.1.

uct: the *Description of the mighty kingdom of Krinke Kesmes* by Hendrik Smeeks.

Between 1710 and 1720 Gian-Paolo Marana's *L'Esploratore turco* (1684) was translated into Dutch (via the English version).<sup>123</sup> Using as rhetorical technique the oblique criticism that would remain popular throughout the eighteenth century, the *Turkish spy* was a commentary on European society and culture by a fictive stranger. The Dutch translator of the *Turkish spy* was Abraham Bogaert (1663–1727), an apothecary and man of letters who travelled widely in the service of the East India Company, and later published an account of his travels along the Asian coast. As a non-academic and self-taught individual participating in an informal network of writers and correspondents, he was a typical representative of Dutch freethinking. Presumably, Bogaert was also the translator of Fontenelle's best-seller *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* (1686), another book against which many people were bound to raise religious objections.<sup>124</sup> Bogaert noted in his preface that many regarded the learned and civilized letters of the *Turkish spy* as the products of a well-travelled writer whose real intention had been to comment on Turkish and Christian culture, and criticize the stupidities of both. The religious message of the book was clear enough. In a letter to Cara Haly, supposedly a physician at Constantinople, the Turk writes about an envoy or ambassador of God, meaning Mohammed, of course; but his choice of words also suggest a Socinian Christ. After the death of such religious envoys, writes the *Turkish spy*, the followers usually begin to separate into sects that persecute each other but have no convincing claim to truth.<sup>125</sup> A letter to Abdel Melech Muli Omar, chairman of the Academy of Sciences, is even clearer. Here the *Turkish spy* is uncompromisingly sceptical, observing that the religion to which different people adhere is an arbitrary consequence of their upbringing, and that adults, who are otherwise able to discern matters clearly, still uphold childish errors and believe things that contradict common sense. Religion must be an invention of politics,

<sup>123</sup> D.tr. [G.P. Marana], *Alle de brieven, en gedenkschriften van eenen Turkschen spion in de hoven van Europa* (1710–1720).

<sup>124</sup> D.tr. B. Fontenelle, *Reden-voeringe over verscheidene waerelden in 't geheel-al* (1702), tr. by 'A.B.' The publisher dedicated the book to Nicolaas Hartsoeker (1656–1725), a Dutch natural philosopher of European repute. See also Marchal, *Fontenelle à l'aube des Lumières*, 163–181.

<sup>125</sup> [Marana], *Alle de brieven*, II, 477–480 (Letter XXXIV).

since so many different people defend so many different religions by acumen or force, without showing through their conduct that they actually believe in the religion they profess.

Frequently, the criticism vented in such fictional travel accounts boiled down to straightforward pleas for religious diversity. Particularly popular in the decades around 1700 were accounts of voyages to a mysterious southern continent and its highly developed civilization. The most famous example of imaginary fiction concerning the austral continent is probably *The history of the Sevarites or Sevarambi*, first published in 1675, but more commonly known under the title of its extended French translation, *Histoire des Sévarambes* (1677–1679). Written by Denis Vairasse, a rather obscure adventurer who eventually settled in the Netherlands after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the *Histoire des Sévarambes* informs the reader on the government, customs, religion and language of an heretofore unknown but highly civilized nation on the Australian continent.<sup>126</sup> A luxury edition appeared in Dutch in 1682. Vairasse's message was no less clear than that of the *Turkish Spy*. He portrayed the religion of the Sevarambi as incontestably deist, miracles as human contrivances devised to ensure the obedience of the ignorant, and religion as an instrument of politics. The Sevarambi acted as true Collegiants. They organized 'colleges' several times a year where ideas were freely and publicly exchanged without any danger of persecution. In 1701, the Dutch translation of the *Histoire des Sévarambes* was issued again,<sup>127</sup> this time also including a Dutch version of *La terre Australe connue* (1676). This was yet another account of the southern continent, written by a defrocked Franciscan monk, Gabriel de Foigny (1630–1692). De Foigny's book depicted a highly civilized society of philosophical, deistic hermaphrodites who worshiped the Incomprehensible, 'avec cette circonstance inviolablement observée de ne prononcer nulle parole & de laisser un chacun dans la liberté d'en penser ce que son esprit lui en suggere.'<sup>128</sup>

Dutch freethinkers did not, of course, depend on translations alone. The *Description of the mighty kingdom of Krinke Kesmes* by Hendrik Smeeks († 1721), an educated surgeon at Zwolle, was first published in 1708.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Von der Mühl, *Denis Veiras*, 184–219.

<sup>127</sup> [D. Vairasse (Veiras)], *Historie der Sevarambes* (1701).

<sup>128</sup> G. de Foigny, *La terre australe connue* (1676) (1990), 119–120 (Chapter VI: 'De la Religion des Australiens').

<sup>129</sup> H. Smeeks, *Beschryvinge van het magtig Koningryk Krinke Kesmes* (s.a.); Van Slee,

The book, which has been erroneously regarded as a direct forerunner of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, is a cluttered account of a Dutch sailor travelling under the Spanish name of Juan de Posos. In 1702, De Posos is shipwrecked in the southern hemisphere off the coast of Krinke Kesmes—an anagram for the 'Kingdom of Henrik Smeets'. The culture of this kingdom is discussed at length. Krinke Kesmes is very old, its chronicles reaching back 20,000 years (not a chronology intended to satisfy the clergy). Due to the stranding of a Persian ship around 1030 A.D., a variety of religions could be found in the kingdom. The ship had contained, apart from 300 souls, a large number of books, including Hebrew Bibles, Greek New Testaments and Arabian Korans. The then king of Krinke Kesmes permitted the various passengers to teach his people according to the books they had taken with them. The result was a cacophony of beliefs, with Arabs, Persians and Turks disputing among each other, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics and Calvinists arguing heatedly, and Pharisees, Essenes and Sadducees debating with no less zeal. The king had a liking for the New Testament, and his chief philosopher was able to reduce the Christian faith to two basic doctrines: 'Love God above all, and love your neighbour as you love yourself', and: 'Give what is God's unto God, and what is Caesar's unto Caesar'. This, claimed the philosopher, was all that was necessary to make a people happy. Thereupon the king decided to build 'a big universal Church' containing as many pulpits as there were sects, where representatives of the various beliefs could teach and deliberate to the benefit of the kingdom. Instead of setting up an orderly discussion, however, they reviled and abused each other, each claiming to possess the truth, and each filled with such passion that it almost seemed as if 'they had belonged to the clerical estate for a long time already.' Since the new clergy of Krinke Kesmes did not dispute out of love for truth, or to convince one another, they were silenced by the king and banned to a remote area, where their descendants still lived in poverty (only the Hollanders were allowed to remain, since their faith seemed the most gentle). The description of the religious history and traditions of Krinke Kesmes is concluded by the sardonic observation of Juan de Posos that 'in Europe these things are

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'De auteur van Krinke Kesmes'. On Dutch imaginary fiction, see Buijnsters, *Imaginaire reisverhalen in Nederland*; also Fausett, *Writing the new world*, 145–157.

quite different, for there we live as Christians ought to live, in love, peace, and concord.<sup>130</sup>

In the face of religious discord, the king of Krinke Kesmes prescribed five articles of faith. (1) You shall worship the one almighty God. (2) You shall obey and honour the authorities. (3) You shall do justice to all. (4) You shall not do to others what you do not wish others to do to you. (5) Those who still worship the ancient sun god Baloka will greet him daily. The latter article was included because rapid changes in the state religion would only cause popular unrest, and because the traditional clergy in Krinke Kesmes was arrogant and prone to rebel. When the king introduced these articles, he also forbade his people to dispute about them on pain of death. However, people were still free to discuss the large number of proverbs and sayings that had been derived from the various religious books brought to the kingdom in 1030, and which were classified into five groups: religion, wisdom, love, friendship, and marriage. The religious sayings valued so highly in Krinke Kesmes begin by defining religion: '*Religion* is a kind of government that aims to improve people's morals, foster the obedience of the community, and do justice to one another'. This was an adroit definition of the confessional public sphere as any, although no orthodox divine would have supported the subsequent religious sayings. The second saying states that religion and language are consequences of upbringing. Another saying sharply condemns the intolerance of the clergy, who reject everything that does not fit in with their own beliefs, 'so that most religions or opinions concerning faith are upheld out of either prejudice or profit.' The venerable sayings from the southern continent go on and on in this vein. Religion is an invention of politics, prescribing to each people the religion that best suits its particular proclivities. The Scriptures are manifestly unclear. Those who obey the inward lawgiver (the natural conscience) do best, since they are thus taught to love their neighbours. Nothing can be known about hell, and theological fancies concerning the pit should not be believed. Churches are infested with hypocrites. The religions of other nations should not be ridiculed. Each man should be allowed to choose his own philosophical and religious preferences. God must be worshipped in silence, since it is better to doubt mysteries in solitude than quarrel

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<sup>130</sup> Smeeks, *Krinke Kesmes*, 126–135.

about them in public. Sensible rulers prevent discord in religious matters. All this is followed, most appropriately, by a series of sayings related to upbringing and education.<sup>131</sup>

*Krinke Kesmes* has little to say on politics and government, but it is clear that the king's actions in respect of the church are uncompromisingly Erastian. Thus, the king has the right to establish the contents of public religion. As Smeeks put it, '*Religion* should be part of *Government*, and *Government* not part of *Religion*.'<sup>132</sup> A copy of *Krinke Kesmes* annotated by Smeeks himself reveals at least one of the sources he used; predictably, this was Marana's *Turkish spy*.<sup>133</sup> The local clergy, involved at that time in the controversy over Van Leenhof, sharply condemned the book for its 'stupid godlessness.' The church council of Zwolle called Smeeks to order. He pleaded innocence and ignorance, claiming not to have intended to write anything derogatory about the Reformed Church, and never to have read Spinoza. He was reprimanded for his absence from church services and placed under censure, a penalty lifted in 1717 following repeated requests. Given the number of editions, the book must have been popular in its day. Various Dutch editions appeared in 1721, 1732, 1755 and 1776, while German translations appeared in 1721, 1748, 1751 and 1776 (and possibly 1785). *Krinke Kesmes* or one of its foreign predecessors is said to have inspired the Hattemist Jacob Roggeveen actually to sail for the South Sea in the early 1720s, in the hope of finding this nation of religious peace.<sup>134</sup> Instead, he discovered Easter Island.

The various examples of imaginary fiction discussed until now comprise a literary genre in which the cause of religious liberty and diversity was pleaded with great open-heartedness. Though unrestrained freethinking was not always the aim, imaginary fiction often amounted to a rejection of organized Christendom, and often invoked the repressive arm of the state to keep the clergy and other quarrelmongers firmly in check. Many such writings of the early eighteenth century, insofar as they were published in Dutch, were probably not intended for educated intellectuals, who could (and very probably did) read the French versions. This applies for instance to the

<sup>131</sup> Smeeks, *Krinke Kesmes*, 150–159.

<sup>132</sup> Smeeks, *Krinke Kesmes*, 155.

<sup>133</sup> Buijnsters (151–155) has shown that some of the religious sayings of *Krinke Kesmes* do indeed correspond to the *Turkish spy*.

<sup>134</sup> Van der Bijl, *Idee en interest*, 179–180; on Roggeveen, see section 2.2 above.

fragments from the *Mémoires de l'Amérique septentrional* (1703) by the French adventurer Louis-Armand de Lahontan (1666–c. 1715). This travel account, ‘augmentée des conversations de l’auteur avec un sauvage de bon sens’, appeared in Dutch in 1710. The original version had been an immediate success, not least because of its resounding denunciation of European civilization in general and Christianity in particular, and the evident Spinozism of the Iroquois. It went through numerous French, English and German editions and appeared again in Dutch in 1739. The translated fragments from Lahontan’s *Mémoires* concerned the views of Canadian savages on traditions, property, and especially religion. Lahontan writes on the savage conviction that the Christian religion must be ‘un ouvrage humain’, since it is divided into so many sects; to this the Dutch translation adds, ‘or an invention of Political people’.<sup>135</sup> This comment was probably made by Nicolas Gueudeville (1652–c. 1721), a defrocked monk living in exile in the Dutch Republic, where he befriended Bayle and issued an anti-French and anti-Catholic periodical. Gueudeville apparently edited the second, more radical edition of Lahontan’s *Mémoires* in 1705, from which the Dutch fragments of the 1710 edition were derived.<sup>136</sup>

The 1710 edition was actually a compilation of extracts from various books. As Rienk Vermij has pointed out, the book also included an early, little-known version of John Toland’s *Letters to Serena* (1704), under the title *On the origin and force of prejudice*.<sup>137</sup> The translator claimed to have chanced upon the manuscript, which was dated 1702. It probably circulated in the Netherlands among Toland’s friends before being published. The 1710 anthology of deists included not only excerpts from Lahontan and Toland but also a translation of the *Description de l’île Formosa en Asie, du gouvernement, des loix, des moeurs & de la religion des habitans* (1705), by George Pzalmanazar. Finally, the book included excerpts from Jean le Clerc’s ‘Avertissement’ in the *Bibliothèque Choisie* of 1705. Here Le Clerc argued, among other things, that freethinking is at least as harmful as the uncritical and unconditional acceptance of everything priests and clerics

<sup>135</sup> L.-A. de Lahontan, *Dialogues curieux entre l’auteur et un sauvage de bon sens qui a voyagé et Mémoires de l’Amérique Septentrionale* (1931); cf. 105–112 for the fragment on religion.

<sup>136</sup> Rosenberg, *Nicolas Gueudeville*, 123–130.

<sup>137</sup> *Van den oorspronk en de kracht der vooroordeelen, door J.T.*, Amsterdam 1710; Vermij, ‘Tolands eerste brief aan Serena.’

declare to be true. These anticlerical comments probably explain why Le Clerc was rather unexpectedly included in an anthology of deists. The publisher of the 1710 edition was required to close his business for one year and six weeks because of the book.<sup>138</sup>

Surprisingly perhaps, given the general interest for Dutch translations of imaginary voyages, there are no Dutch translations of the novels of Simon Tyssot de Patot (1655–1738). This applies above all to the *Voyages et aventures de Jaques Massé* (first published between 1714 and 1717), qualified as a ‘liber atheisticus et scandalosus’ by a contemporary German commentator. Tyssot was a Huguenot immigrant who received most of his education in the Republic and eventually settled in the backwater town of Deventer as a teacher.<sup>139</sup> Despite his lack of formal education (he spoke no Latin), and despite firm opposition from the church, he was in due course appointed professor of mathematics in 1690. Tyssot was acquainted with Locke (who visited him at Deventer) and very probably with the many free-thinkers, including Toland, who made the Republic their temporary residence during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Tyssot, who, if anything, had an immense dislike for the clergy, was acquainted with Spinoza’s writings and criticized the Bible in Spinozistic fashion. Unrecognized as the writer of *Jaques Massé*, Tyssot only became the centre of a controversy late in life when he published his *Lettres choisies* (1726), which the Deventer church council, not without justification, found to be morally offensive and replete with libertine and Spinozistic views. The controversy led to his dismissal.

An account of the genre would hardly be complete without mentioning the Danish traveller, historian, dramatist and professor Ludvig Holberg (1684–1754). Holberg made a point of visiting the aged Jean le Clerc in Amsterdam during the 1720s. The professor’s maid inadvertently locked them in the study and returned to relieve them only much later, so that they had ample opportunity for profound discussion—on toleration, perhaps, which was one of the topics of Holberg’s *Nicolai Klimii Iter subterraneum* (1741). The book was published in Dutch in the same year by Isaak van der Kloot (1700–1743), a publisher whose list included other imaginary voyages, and other barely tolerable books.<sup>140</sup> Klim’s subterranean journey leads him to

<sup>138</sup> According to the *Bibliotheca Schultensiana* (...), 166.

<sup>139</sup> Rosenberg, *Tyssot de Patot*.

<sup>140</sup> I have consulted the second edition: D.tr. L. Holberg, *Onderaardsche reis van*



Potu, a land of talking trees, whose religion he describes in familiar ways. The religious system is concise, the confession of faith short; it is forbidden, on pain of exile to the firmament (the inside of the earth's crust), to comment on the Holy Books; and anyone who presumes to dispute on the essence and attributes of God is bled and put in the public madhouse. Basic beliefs include the existence of a supreme being and his providential sway over the world. Apart from this, everyone is free to worship as he or she pleases, and only those who publicly contest the established religion are treated as disturbers of the peace. The subterranean natives cautioned Klim not to condemn others because of their beliefs and advised him to follow only his own conscience, since this was the best way to avoid disputes. There was, concluded Klim, little difference between the Potuan religion and deism, except that the former claimed to have their faith by divine Revelation.

Tales of other climes and times continued to be a popular means of ventilating religious criticism throughout the century. *Die glücklichste Insul auf der gantzen Welt, oder das Land der Zufriedenheit* (1728) discussed the government, constitution, fertility, customs, religion and church organization of a newly found and happy island; Dutch editions appeared in 1764, 1776 and 1809. The book was written by Philipp Balthasar Sinold von Schütz (1657–1742), a German jurist with pietistic inclinations. It is, again, the tale of a journey to an island in the southern hemisphere.<sup>141</sup> About two-thirds of the first part of *Die glücklichste Insul* is concerned with the island's religion. The clergy on this isle of contentment obviously shared none of the imperfections of European countries. The travellers meet with one of the island's most eminent clergymen (simply known as 'church teachers', and democratically elected by the congregation). He surprised the voyagers by his apostolic candour and simplicity, and it seemed to them that they were conversing with an early Christian under the empire of pagan Rome. He explained that since all islanders were taught both Hebrew and Greek, each person was capable of reading the original texts of the Bible, and of judging for him- or herself in matters of faith. The basic confession consisted of a number of doc-

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*Claas Klim* (1761); another edition appeared in 1778; chapter VI is concerned especially with religion. See also the introduction in a recent reissue of the 1741 translation, André Hanou ed. (1995).

<sup>141</sup> Brüggemann, *Utopie und Robinsonade*, 176–183.

trines and was greatly admired by the travellers, who deplored the fact that, in Europe, councils and synods had led to an unnecessary proliferation of articles. In the second part, the king tries (unsuccessfully) to persuade the travellers to remain on the happy island, where there is no doctrinal confusion, and the inhabitants live in one spirit (Eph. 4:3).<sup>142</sup>

Later in the century, ideals of tolerant societies were often projected into the future, as in the classic *L'An deux mille quatre cent quarante* (1770) by Louis-Sébastien Mercier (1740–1814).<sup>143</sup> It was not translated into Dutch until 1792–1794; the translator was Jan David Pasteur, a civil servant with Patriot sympathies mainly known for having rendered into Dutch the travels of James Cook.<sup>144</sup> Mercier's book was as anti-Roman as it was anticlerical. The chapter on 'Théologie et jurisprudence' begins with the statement: 'Heureux mortels! Vous n'avez donc plus de théologiens!' Since the people in 2440 worship only the sublime and unknowable Supreme Being, theology itself has become altogether superfluous. There are few ministers, observes Mercier in the chapter on 'Les ministres de paix', and all of them are 'sages, éclairés, tolérants.' They are not factious, the spirit of peace and concord guides their actions, and they attempt to reconcile 'les esprits divisés'.<sup>145</sup> In 2440, Catholics, Lutherans and Calvinists will be united in one confession, one religion, and one church (and it is a Pope who manages to bring all this about).<sup>146</sup> In a Dutch imitation of Mercier's book, which appeared in 1777, the writer argued that reasonable deists would still exist after seven centuries. They would uphold the same ethics as all other 'simple united Christians', and attend their congregations from time to time.<sup>147</sup> In similar vein

<sup>142</sup> *Het gelukkigste eiland op de gantsche waereld, of het land van vergenoegzaamheid*, Amsterdam 1764, I, §§ 20–23, 34, 58; II, § 61. The king's words were stressed a review in *VL* 1765–i, 132.

<sup>143</sup> Mercier's play *Jean Hennuyer* (1772) was translated as *De verdraagzaamheid in haren luister, of Jan Hennuyer, bisschop van Lizieux* (1773). The play concerned the refusal of the bishop of Lisieux to sanction the massacre on Saint Bartholomew's day; it generally celebrated the spiritual unity of Catholics and Protestants. See Adams, *The Huguenots and French opinion*, 174–175.

<sup>144</sup> D.tr. L.S. Mercier, *Het jaar twee duizend vier honderd en veertig. Een droom* (1792–1793).

<sup>145</sup> L.S. Mercier, *L'An deux mille quatre cent quarante. Rêve s'il en fut jamais* (1971), 148, 172.

<sup>146</sup> Another Dutch imitation of Mercier was *Het toekomstend haar drie duizend. Eene mymering* [*The future year 3000. A dream*], 1792, by A. Fokke Sz.; the author noted that in the year 3000 theology was basically good moral philosophy, and that church authority was wholly unknown.

<sup>147</sup> E. Wolff, *Holland in het jaar 2440* (1978), 32; note that the authorship of Beije

Gerrit Paape (1752–1803), a highly critical publicist and political activist of the 1780s, wrote a utopian account of the Dutch Republic as he imagined it would be in 1998. Predictably, all men would then be Christians, and everybody would worship a benevolent God, unburdened by complex doctrines nobody understood. And by then, even the clergy would have become useful members of society.<sup>148</sup>

We may conclude our journey through the catalogue of travel accounts with the writings of the enigmatic individualist Petrus van Woensel (1747–1808). Neither an armchair tourist nor a grub-street hack, Van Woensel was an educated and well-travelled man who lived on a good salary. After studying medicine at the Leiden academy, he worked as a military physician at St. Petersburg and Amsterdam, toured through Turkey and Russia in the 1780s, and later went to South America as a physician in the service of the Dutch navy. In 1796, he again settled in St. Petersburg as a political informant for the Batavian regime. His concise and readable *Annotations made during a journey through Turkey, Anatolia, Crimea and Russia* appeared anonymously in two volumes in 1792 and 1795.<sup>149</sup> Van Woensel's travel account, which contained authentic descriptions of the Ottoman Empire and Russia, was a passionate indictment of self-styled cosmopolitans who had travelled no further than Amsterdam. Or, for that matter, London, where the *Monthly Review* wiped the floor with the book and qualified its author as an untrustworthy eccentric. The pungent religious criticism of the *Annotations* resembles that of the *Turkish spy* and other books in the genre. Van Woensel, who claimed to be better acquainted with *Don Quixote* than the Bible, suggested that organized religion was merely the external dressing of an underlying universal deism. Hence, the differences between Islam and Christendom were in reality very slight; and, he added, the differences between (fatalist) Islam and (predestinarian) Calvinism

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Wolff has not been ascertained. In E. Wolff-Bekker and A. Deken, *Brieven over verscheiden onderwerpen* (1780–1781), I, 3–7, the authors note that the whole novel is only one step removed from Christendom, that its moral philosophy is evidently that of the Gospel.

<sup>148</sup> G. Paape, *De Bataafsche Republiek* (1998) [1st ed. 1798], 88–95. On Paape, see the introduction by Peter Altena in G. Paape, *Mijne volijke wijsbegeerte in mijne ballingschap* (1996), 23–38.

<sup>149</sup> [Petrus van Woensel], *Staat der geleerdheid in Turkijen (1791)* (1995); this is the third section of *Aanteekeningen, gehouden op eene reizje door Turkijen, Natoliën, de Krim en Rusland, in de jaaren 1784–89* [1792–1795]; the publisher was in all probability the outspoken Patriot Willem Holtrop.

were even slighter. Though Turkish scholarship was backward and underdeveloped, Muslim philosophy was advanced in that it favoured the Spinozist theory concerning the origin of the world more than it did the deist (that is, it denied creation). Theology in the Turkish realm went hand in hand with law, observed the traveller, since the Koran was a book of both religion and law. Turkish ministers proclaimed religious and civil law in their mosques, a teaching of much greater utility than the *theologia polemica* and abstruse Hebrew and Greek etymologies taught in Christian pulpits. In a number of annotations, Van Woensel added anticlerical insult to anti-Christian injury. He noted that in Europe church services were attended only by the ignorant lower classes. He advised that the magistracy inspect and censor clerical goods, including sermons, just as they sampled food products and medicine.<sup>150</sup>

The view that the clergy was, or ought to be, a mere instrument of the secular state was characteristic of both the early Spinozists and contemporary supporters of the German *Aufklärung*. In this sense, perhaps, Spinozism did triumph in the end. Much imaginary fiction fulfilled the same subversive role throughout the century. It began by levelling criticism at the orthodox public sphere, and ended by disputing the new standards of religious politeness. We shall turn now, however, from subversive criticism and utopian visions to more realistic attempts at undermining orthodox control of the confessional public. The church's role in the Old Regime was a cherished topic in the study of natural law.

### 5.5 ON THE STATE OF NATURE AND THE DOMINANT CHURCH

Germany was a ready supplier of academic jurists, who until well into the eighteenth century were happy to share in the international reputation enjoyed by Dutch law scholarship. Heineccius, Barbeyrac, Trotz, Van der Marck, Pestel, Schroeder, to name but a few, all came to the United Provinces from or via German lands. Once the study of natural law began to flourish in Germany itself, and the international standing of the Dutch philological or 'elegant' school waned, Germany became an exporter of scholarship as such. What

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<sup>150</sup> [Van Woensel], *Staat der geleerdheid in Turkijen*, 8–12, 34–37.

was the significance to the Dutch toleration debate of Dutch and German traditions of legal scholarship? In this section we shall briefly examine some ideas and writings of Samuel Pufendorf, Christian Trotz, Frederik Pestel, Gerard Noodt, and Jean Barbeyrac.

The Dutch already had Grotius. What need had they for Pufendorf? Actually, Samuel Pufendorf (1632–1694) was welcomed at the Dutch academies as an *alter Grotius*. Most eighteenth-century law professors expounded natural law on the basis of only two books, Grotius' *De iure belli ac pacis* and Pufendorf's *De officio hominis et civis iuxta legem naturalem* (1673),<sup>151</sup> and they often read the one into the other. Two important commentaries on Pufendorf were written in the United Provinces, one by Jean Barbeyrac at Groningen and the other by Everard Otto at Utrecht. Pufendorf's views did not go unopposed, but apparently he did rather well at the Dutch academies. Does this apply also to his views on church unity and toleration? In 1688 and 1689, Pufendorf had discussed the issue of toleration with Jean le Clerc.<sup>152</sup> Pufendorf had observed that although some regarded religious diversity as the basis of Dutch prosperity, in general diversity must be considered a weakness. Contesting this, Le Clerc declared that religious unity was certain proof of the excessive power of the clergy, and surely ecclesiastical power detracted from the prince's authority. Le Clerc's proof was, of course, the Dutch Republic, which demonstrated by its very existence that *tolérance politique* conduced to peace and prosperity. In his rejoinder to Le Clerc, Pufendorf continued to emphasize that religious unity led to greater stability. He did believe that political toleration could be exercised in the state, but only as a temporary measure, to be implemented prudently when religious unity seemed out of the question. Incidentally, Le Clerc, opting for the Arminian solution, reached a rather similar conclusion. Unity was desirable, but it was not to be achieved at the cost of coercion or persecution; and unity could be had on the basis of a minimalist creed. Pufendorf further believed that unity among Lutherans and Calvinists was necessary to retain the balance of power in the German Empire between Protestants and Catholics.

<sup>151</sup> D.tr. S. Pufendorf, *De plichten van den mensch ten opsichte van de wet der nature en der burgerstaat* (1708); the translation is of little further interest with respect to the Dutch toleration debate. For the reception of Pufendorf in francophone periodicals, see De Vet, 'Some periodicals of the United Provinces on Pufendorf', espec. 219–220.

<sup>152</sup> The debate is discussed in Zurbuchen, 'From denominationalism to Enlightenment'; Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, 48–49.

Subsequent to the Revocation, Pufendorf began to develop new arguments on religious freedom.<sup>153</sup> In his well-known *De habitu religionis christianae ad vitam civilem* (1687) he still maintained that unity should be fostered by the sovereign.<sup>154</sup> However, he now believed in the possibility of achieving a set of fundamental Christian articles based on reason alone, and required the sovereign to appoint reasonable theologians rather than an orthodox clergy to write up the land's confession of faith. He also insisted that the individual's religious freedom cannot be delegated to the sovereign, and that religious conviction cannot be obtained by force. His posthumous *Jus feziale, sive De consensu et dissensu Protestantium* (1695), in which he delineated a possible doctrinal foundation for Calvino-Lutheran unity, was not translated into Dutch but given extensive coverage in the French-language periodicals. Since full religious conciliation is not something that can easily be achieved but must instead be hoped for, Pufendorf suggested that a *conciliatio tolerantiae mixta* be pursued in the meantime. This entails the recognition of a single foundation of faith and the mutual forbearance of adiaphoral differences. To ultimately overcome these differences, Pufendorf suggested that both clergy and laity negotiate to lay down certain conventions rather than binding decrees. The attainment of church unity necessitates the development of a common theological system in which fundamentals are clearly defined, and which should be able to include both Lutherans and Calvinists.<sup>155</sup> Jean le Clerc and the Huguenot lawyer and journalist Henri de Basnage de Beauval criticized Pufendorf's *Jus feziale divinum* for its Lutheran prejudices. In the end, Pufendorf's writings were perhaps too Lutheran to make much progress among Dutch proponents of toleration.<sup>156</sup> He lost little affection on sectarians, for instance. He found the Zwingli-Calvin strand of the Reformation too radical and in any case superfluous. He objected to the doctrine of predestination, which destroyed all notions of freedom of the will and made people

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<sup>153</sup> Zurbuchen, 'Samuel Pufendorf's concept of toleration'; Zurbuchen, 'From denominationalism to Enlightenment'. However, see Döring, *Pufendorf-Studien*; also Palladini, 'Stato, chiesa e tolleranza'.

<sup>154</sup> D.tr. *Tractaat van de Christelyke religie, in vergelyking van het borgerlyke leeven* (1690), tr. by 'A.G.'

<sup>155</sup> Ritschl, *Das orthodoxe Luthertum*, 465–468.

<sup>156</sup> This aspect of Pufendorf's thought is emphasized by Döring, 'Samuel von Pufendorf and toleration'.

melancholic, and protested against what he regarded as the Calvinist preference for republics.

Le Clerc did value Pufendorf as a fellow combatant in the fight against 'Papism'—by which both men meant the Protestant clergy.<sup>157</sup> Illustrative of the growing Dutch opposition to orthodox confession-alism in the early decades of the eighteenth century is the fact that in 1724 the arch-translator Isaac Le Long provided a Dutch version of Pufendorf's *Politische Betrachtung der geistlichen Monarchie des Heiligen Stuhls zu Rom* (original version 1679).<sup>158</sup> The translation sheds an interesting light on Le Long's role as a mediator of German pietist literature. He may simply have been attacking Papism, but given his affiliation to pietism this seems unlikely. Le Long probably sympathized with the pietist opposition to established orthodoxies, and antipapism in the sense of anticlericalism was an important streak in Pufendorf's thought.<sup>159</sup> In contrast to his later *De habitu*, Pufendorf's *Politische Betrachtung* stressed the subordination of the church to the state, and gave the secular authorities the right to fill offices. More importantly, the *Politische Betrachtung* contained extensive annotations by Thomasius, in which the latter extended Pufendorf's discussion of Protestant reunion to formal toleration for Mennonites and Socinians. Thomasius rejected Pufendorf's position on religious concord, claiming that it is impossible to ascertain theological truth definitively, that people ought to be free to determine their own beliefs, and that the sovereign should protect dissenters against persecution.

It seems somewhat surprising that the Dutch never familiarized themselves much with Christian Thomasius (1655–1728). His opposition to witchcraft may have been redundant in the Dutch context, but his harangues against the orthodox establishment certainly were not. Two German-Dutch law scholars did promote Thomasius in the Netherlands. One was the law professor Van der Marck, who will be discussed later; the other was Christian Heinrich Trotz (1703–1773). Originally from Brandenburg, Trotz had studied at Danzig, Halle, Marburg and Utrecht, and is said to have converted

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<sup>157</sup> See Zurbuchen, 'Gewissensfreiheit und Toleranz', for Thomasius' criticism of Pufendorf's unionist ideas. Thomasius did not believe that a communal Reformed-Lutheran confession could be established, and was strongly in favour of an Erastian church policy allowing for the religious freedom of minorities.

<sup>158</sup> D.tr. S. Pufendorf, *Polityke betrachtinge van de geestelyke monarchie des stoels te Romem* (1724).

<sup>159</sup> Zurbuchen, 'Samuel Pufendorf's concept of toleration', 179.

to Calvinism in the 1730s. He was appointed professor of law at Franeker in 1741, from whence he was promoted to Utrecht in 1755. He is mostly remembered for his historical analyses of the Dutch constitution.<sup>160</sup> Trotz shared Thomasius' views on toleration. In his commentary on the Republic's constitution, for example, he expressed his opposition to the public status of the Reformed Church in a minute analysis of Article 13 (concerning religion) of the Union of Utrecht. He claimed, among other things, that religion was irrelevant to the nature of the state (a Republic could well do without a Calvinist church) and that the States General of 1579 had been in favour of uniting the different religions in one church. Moreover, he contended that each Province could change the legal position of the Reformed Church with a stroke of the pen. The latter argument had been defended by one of the most popular commentators on Article 13 of the Union of Utrecht, Cornelis van Bynkershoek (1673–1743).<sup>161</sup> This States-oriented jurist had posed the question, 'Whether the *ius religionis*, as it once was, is still in possession of each Province?'<sup>162</sup> Van Bynkershoek argued that each Province had the sovereign right to determine the public faith it maintained. No stipulation accords the prerogatives of the public faith perpetually to the Reformed. Contemporary commentators eagerly appropriated the argument.<sup>163</sup>

James Boswell spoke highly of the 'celebrated Professor Trotz', with whom he vowed everlasting friendship over a glass of Malaga, and who 'gives excellent lectures on the Civil Law, which he explains, not dryly like a pedant, but like a philosopher. He now and again intersperses ingenious moral observations and amusing historical anecdotes, and his college is truly a school of liberal knowledge.'<sup>164</sup> Trotz's main contribution to the toleration debate was his inaugural address at Franeker, on the jurist's entitlement to freedom of thought and

<sup>160</sup> C.H. Trotz, *Commentarius legum fundament. foederati Belgii* (1778).

<sup>161</sup> See Krikke and Faber, 'Cornelis van Bynkershoek'.

<sup>162</sup> C. van Bynkershoek, *Quaestionum juris publici libri duo* (1737), 315–325 (Ch. 18). One of the points discussed by law scholars concerned the question whether the decision by the Grand Meeting of 1651, on the obligation of each Province to maintain the public faith as it had been defined at Dort, had the authority of a promise (*pollicitatio*) or a contract (*pactum*). See the objections to the views of Bynkershoek and Trotz in *NB* 1779-i, 439–447.

<sup>163</sup> See Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 189–190.

<sup>164</sup> J. Boswell, *Boswell in Holland*, 42 and 272. The Scottish writer James Boswell (1740–1795) wrote a diary while studying law at Utrecht in 1763–1764.



speech.<sup>165</sup> He began his address by describing the development of society, beginning with the state of nature. He claimed that in primitive society only one general guideline obtained; it stated that the well-being of the commonwealth must be the common pursuit of all. In due course everything considered to be conducive to general well-being was enacted as law, but only after due consultation of the citizens. To further the common good, citizens had the freedom to reveal their innermost thoughts in writing, even when their views differed from others. It was this liberty, licensed by natural law and widespread among ancient peoples, which Trotz wished to discuss. He did so from the point of view of religion, philosophy, history, and law. Trotz made a claim for complete religious liberty in academia, excluding atheism and other excesses. According to the law of nature, religion must be free from domination, while heresy cannot be a crime. In the commonwealth different religious views must, therefore, be tolerated. If someone is sincerely convinced that the dominant religion is false, he must be permitted to criticize it (this may well have been a reference to Johannes Stinstra's refusal to abjure anti-Trinitarian doctrine). Trotz applauded the Romans for allowing all kinds of religious groups to convene as long as they did not stoop to subversive activity. He also praised religious freedom in England, where deists and Arians could openly put forward their opinions. Trotz mentioned in passing the views on heresy of Thomasius and Gottlieb Gerhard Titius (1661–1714). A pupil of Thomasius, Titius shared his teacher's disgust for domineering clergymen.

The conflict between law scholars and theologians was an enduring one, but not all jurists were, of course, critical of the established clergy. Joseph Priestley had attacked the famous William Blackstone in 1769 for observing in his *Commentaries on the laws of England* (1765–69) that dissent was an insult to the Church of England. Perhaps Frederik Willem Pestel (1724–1805) can be seen as a less outspoken Dutch Blackstone. Pestel was a professor at Rinteln in Germany before he came to Leiden in 1763. A follower of Wolff, he is mostly remembered for having written the first full-scale description of the constitution of the United Provinces, the *Commentarii de Republica Batava* (1783). In his own day he was noted for his Orangism, on account

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<sup>165</sup> C.H. Trotz, *De libertate sentiendi dicendique jurisconsultis propria* (1741); the Dutch edition (1743) contains poems by members of the Rotterdam poetry circle *Natura et arte*. Westerbaen, De Haes, Smits, Van der Schelling, Versteeg (see section 5.2).

of which he was dismissed from office in 1795. In the first volume of his *Commentarii*, Pestel discussed the position of the Reformed Church. He carefully rejected the term 'dominant church', which in his view smacked of intolerance. But he did argue that although no one was required to enter into the public church against his will, nobody was permitted to establish a church without prior permission of the States or the magistracy. He emphasized, moreover, that at the Grand Meeting of the Provincial States in 1651 it had been decided that no other religions would be tolerated apart from those already accepted before that date, which excluded Socinianism from toleration. The tolerated sects are permitted to perform their worship, but only in a limited fashion, comparable to the *privatum religionis exercitium* in Germany. They have the right to organize their own affairs as any other society, on condition that the government has access to their meetings.<sup>166</sup> This was all rather traditional, although it was said (by the clique surrounding his colleague Van der Marck) that Pestel was not as orthodox as he made out to be.<sup>167</sup> Van der Marck's colleague and successor at Groningen, Ludwig Conrad Schroeder (1724–1801), was another conservative like Pestel, and his *Elementa juris naturalis, socialis, et gentium* (1775) was similarly Wolffian in tenor. He argued that the sovereign possessed three rights vis-à-vis the church. The prince had the right to inspect any society in the state, and hence the church was subject to his supervision. Secondly, the prince had the right to make certain that the church did not harm the commonwealth. Finally, the prince possessed the *imperium sacrum*, the right to govern the church's activities for the well-being of the commonwealth.<sup>168</sup> Such moderate, conservative Erastianism imported from Germany obviously appealed to the ruling class in the United Provinces.

In theory, natural law posed a formidable challenge to theology. God himself had created natural law, claimed the theorists, which thus required no special revelation to buttress its authority. Natural law was in any case more fundamental to society than ecclesiastical formularies and civil edicts. It could be turned into a potent means of opposition to the church, the clergy, and intolerant sovereigns. In contrast to the German lands, natural law began to make headway

<sup>166</sup> Cf. the comments in *NB* 1783-i, 223–230.

<sup>167</sup> ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by G.W. Marle, dd. 3–2–1773.

<sup>168</sup> Cf. *NB* 1776-i, 169–184.

rather belatedly in the Republic. To be sure, the subject had been taught by Noodt at Leiden between 1686 and 1725, as well as by others in the first half of the century. Nevertheless, natural law professors were formally appointed as such only in the late 1740s, and not before the 1760s did the Dutch clergy begin to retaliate against the dissemination of natural law theory on any wide scale. By then, of course, it was too late. In 1770, for instance, Johan Wichers (1740–1818) publicly defended a thesis *De aequalitate hominum naturali non violanda* under the supervision of Van der Marck, sharply criticizing Article 36 of the Belgic Confession (on the duty of the government to eradicate heresy).<sup>169</sup> Such theses would have been unthinkable a decade or two earlier. In these later years, many divines probably sympathized with the Groningen preacher Theodorus Brunsveld de Blau (1729–1815), who in 1770 attacked his colleagues' infatuation with natural law, to the detriment of received doctrine.<sup>170</sup>

In their lectures, law scholars generally followed Grotius and Pufendorf and, after he had been introduced into Dutch law by Van der Marck in the early 1760s, also Christian Wolff. Throughout the century, however, the cause of religious toleration was intimately bound up with two academic jurists, Gerard Noodt and Jean Barbeyrac. One of the laudatory poems added to Trotz's inaugural address is typical in its acclaim of the 'Trotzes, the Noodts, the Barbeyracs/Who love Freedom/By whose mouths wisdom preaches/So that man thinks and speaks freely'.<sup>171</sup> If a Dutch law professor needed praising, there was no better way of doing so than to compare him to Noodt or Barbeyrac. Both stood in a tradition of natural law that went back to Hermann Conring (1607–1681), professor of political philosophy at Helmstedt. Conring had argued that the state ought to be concerned only with support for the natural religion, and that all convictions based on the Christian Revelation, as well as the beliefs of heathens, Jews and Muslims should be tolerated. Pufendorf later extended this theory to religions as organized entities, as *collegia* with the right to worship in public. He conceived of the prince as possessing *duplex persona*. As head of state, he held authority over the natural religion, which had to be maintained because it served a moral purpose in the state. As a prominent member of his denom-

<sup>169</sup> Lindeboom, 'Een Patriots predikant', 90.

<sup>170</sup> Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck*, 35–36.

<sup>171</sup> C.H. Trotz, *Intree-rede (. . .) over de vryheit van gevoelen en spreken* (1743).

ination, he could influence the church affairs of what in most cases was the 'dominant' religion. A measure of conservatism was inherent in this school of natural law. The prince could make use of—or monopolize—all the means of persuasion in order to foster the interests of his own confession.<sup>172</sup> Noodt was more radical in that he denied all government authority in religious affairs, apparently even in the maintenance of a basic natural religion. Like Barbeyrac, however, Noodt could be read as supporting church and state relations indirectly, in the sense that the prince could and should foster the interests of the dominant church in his quality of church member. This did not contradict Noodt's rejection of the *ius circa sacra*, which had been so vigorously advocated by Grotius and Spinoza,<sup>173</sup> but it did contradict Locke's—or, for that matter, Van Slingelandt's—plea for the complete separation of church and state.

Gerard Noodt (1647–1725) mainly contributed to Dutch discourse on toleration through his academic lectures. Most early eighteenth-century jurists who stood for religious liberty claimed to have been inspired by him. One milestone was Noodt's famous address *De religione ab imperio iure gentium libera*, held in 1706 at Leiden university, and subsequently quoted by radical pietists, dissenters, jurists, and political publicists in the Netherlands and Germany.<sup>174</sup> Discussing 'religion as free from domination according to the law of nations',<sup>175</sup> Noodt argued that individuals possess a natural liberty to ascertain their own religious beliefs, that they are free to associate in religious congregations, and that religion should be free from the influence of the civil authorities. The dominion of a prince ought to concern the welfare of the civil state only. All other matters, including religion, are beyond his jurisdiction. Arguing from natural law, Noodt pointed out that the authorities, in tolerating religions other than the official one, were not granting their adherents a favour, but giving them their rightful due. Man is naturally free to believe what he wishes to believe, and the government should not attempt to exercise

<sup>172</sup> Dreitzel, 'Gewissensfreiheit und soziale Ordnung', 10–14.

<sup>173</sup> The point is stressed in Van den Bergh, 'Noodt en Spinoza'.

<sup>174</sup> I have used G. Noodt, *Opera omnia* (1760), I, 518–526. This is the text of the first edition: *Dissertatio de religione ab imperio iure gentium libera* (1706).

<sup>175</sup> I shall not discuss the address at length here; recent expositions are Van den Bergh, *The life and work of Gerard Noodt*, 224–238; Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 41–45; Van Eijnatten, 'Gerard Noodt's standing'; above all Lomonaco, *Tolleranza e libertà di coscienza*, 5–66 (also contains the full Latin text of Noodt's address).

control. Noodt did not explicitly mention Socinians and atheists, but it could be inferred from his general argument that he would not have denied them the natural liberty to express their own religious convictions. In effect, Noodt pleaded for full religious diversity.<sup>176</sup>

Noodt's argument was clear enough to awaken suspicions, but too general to elicit a vigorous response from the theologians in his audience. Nor would it have been easy to censure a scholar with so magnificent a reputation. As was usual for such addresses, Noodt published his Latin text in a standard academic quarto edition. However, the potentially subversive nature of his address is borne out by the fact that the translator who prefixed an introduction to the Dutch editions of 1706, 1707, 1716 and 1719 preferred to remain anonymous.<sup>177</sup> The Dutch translation of Noodt's address ended up in the Tirion edition of 1734, which in turn was reissued as the Van der Meersch edition of 1774. Given the Latin and French editions extant in the Netherlands, it would be fair to say that the eighteenth-century Dutch market was just about saturated with Noodt's *De religione ab imperio iure gentium libera*. The address was compulsory reading for any Dutch legal scholar who entertained ideals of toleration. Across the Dutch religious spectrum, everybody had something positive to say about Noodt. Even orthodox divines generally did not fail to praise him, smothering the potentially subversive gist of his message in loving embrace.<sup>178</sup> If the English had Locke and the Germans had Thomasius, the Dutch had Gerard Noodt.

Noodt's stature was equalled, if not eclipsed, by that of Jean Barbeyrac (1674–1744).<sup>179</sup> As a professor of public and private law at Groningen university since 1717, Barbeyrac was one of the leading jurists of his time. He directed his pleas for tolerance through francophone Huguenot circles, tending to remain somewhat aloof from Dutch affairs—partly because it was unnecessary for an academic to learn Dutch, and partly out of expedience. He was known as a highly critical adversary of established orthodoxies.<sup>180</sup> Barbeyrac particularly achieved renown through his translations of Grotius and

<sup>176</sup> Van den Bergh, *The life and work of Gerard Noodt*, 232.

<sup>177</sup> D.tr. G. Noodt, *De godsdienst vry van heerschappye naer het recht der volkeren* (1719), tr. by 'E.B.D.V.'

<sup>178</sup> For the reception, see Van Eijnatten, 'Gerard Noodt's standing'.

<sup>179</sup> Meylan, *Jean Barbeyrac*.

<sup>180</sup> Othmer, *Berlin und die Verbreitung des Naturrechts*, 68–81.

Pufendorf. His footnotes to these editions were extremely popular during much of the eighteenth century, and he used them to disseminate Locke's ideas on the continent. Barbeyrac's work on toleration<sup>181</sup> includes a French translation of Noodt's address, published in 1706 and 1714 as 'Discours sur la liberté de conscience', and later included in a collection of texts edited by Barbeyrac and issued in 1731.<sup>182</sup> The Noodt editions inspired several German and English translations, not the least because Barbeyrac appended some 77 footnotes. These notes include references to Gilbert Burnet, Jean le Clerc, Samuel Pufendorf, the French Socinian Charles le Cène (1647–1703), the Dutch Remonstrant Adriaan van Paets (1631–1686), Matthew Tindal, and above all John Locke and Pierre Bayle.<sup>183</sup> Barbeyrac carefully developed the notions concerning religious diversity implicit in Noodt's address. Emphasizing the role of the individual conscience and reason in determining moral beliefs, he also argued that the sovereign power should refrain from intervening against such beliefs unless they disturbed the social order. Accepting Pufendorf's voluntarist view of natural law, Barbeyrac believed that God commanded moral beliefs. Believers consequently possessed the natural right to develop their own individual conceptions of God, a view that excluded atheism but otherwise made ample allowances for religious dissent.

The twelfth chapter ('Sur ce que l'on dit de Grégoire de Nazianze') of Barbeyrac's *Traité de la morale des Pères* contains an oft-quoted distinction between *tolérance ecclésiastique* and *tolérance civile*.<sup>184</sup> Barbeyrac accused his scholarly adversary Dom Remi Ceillier (1688–1761), a French Benedictine, of confounding the two categories:

Il y a deux sortes de Tolérance, que mon Censeur confond toujours, la Tolérance Ecclésiastique, & la Tolérance Civile. La première consiste à souffrir dans une même Société Ecclésiastique ceux qui ont quelque sentiment particulier. L'autre, à laisser, dans un Etat, la Liberté de Conscience, à ceux qui ne sont pas de la Religion Dominante, ou

<sup>181</sup> A major treatment is Lomonaco, *Tolleranza e libertà di coscienza*, 67–123; see also Zurbuchen, *Naturrecht und natürliche Religion*, espec. chapter 6; Hochstrasser, 'The claims of conscience'.

<sup>182</sup> G. Noodt, *De pouvoir des souverains; et de la liberté de conscience* (1707); J. Barbeyrac, *Recueil de discours sur diverses matieres importantes* (1731).

<sup>183</sup> On the various editions of Noodt and on Barbeyrac's annotations, see Van Eijnatten, 'Gerard Noodt's standing'.

<sup>184</sup> J. Barbeyrac, *Traité de la morale des pères de l'église* (1728), 166–206. Arrenberg, 37, mentions a Dutch translation: *Verhandeling over de zedeleer der kerkvaderen* (1763).

qui s'en sont separez, ou en ont été exclus, à cause de certaines opinions particulières.<sup>185</sup>

The distinction, which had been common enough in orthodox scholastic handbooks, including Gisbert Voet's *Politica ecclesiastica*,<sup>186</sup> was especially prominent among francophone Huguenots. It figured, for example, in Henri Basnage de Beauval's *Tolérance des religions* (1684).<sup>187</sup> Regarded from the point of view of later, more radical eighteenth-century critics, the distinction had one basic flaw. It failed adequately to question a hidden link between ecclesiastical and civil tolerance. This link was what Barbeyrac called the 'Religion Dominante'; it was a hidden link because contemporary commentators avoided commenting on it, either because they implicitly agreed that there should be a dominant religion or because they believed it wiser not to reject it in so many words. If the established church maintained doctrinal discipline internally, it could never do so without reference to political power. Moreover, as the legally privileged guardian of public morality, it could hardly be expected not to attempt to apply its doctrinal assumptions externally, and the state as official or semi-official protector could not be expected not to listen.<sup>188</sup> All 'dominant religions' in early modern Europe considered a number of doctrines—at least all those doctrines which Socinians usually denied—as minimal requirements for any Christian commonwealth, and they used their connections with political power to have them maintained. Barbeyrac's definition was significant in that it vouchsafed the rights of the individual conscience, but essentially conservative in that it recognized the bond between the dominant church and political authority.

Thus, the distinction between *tolérance ecclésiastique* and *tolérance civile* is less clear-cut than it seems. The distinction was virtually premised on the existence of a state-sponsored public church. It mediated between religious concord and religious diversity, and the emphasis on the one or the other depended on who was trying to make which

<sup>185</sup> Barbeyrac, *Traité de la morale des Pères*, § IX.

<sup>186</sup> Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 18–20.

<sup>187</sup> Cf. the extensive quotation in Simonutti, 'Between political loyalty and religious liberty', 525.

<sup>188</sup> The failure to discuss this hidden link is also a basic flaw in Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, who takes for granted the distinction between civil and ecclesiastical toleration. See also Schillings and Bots, 'Le plaidoyer des journalistes de Hollande'.

point. The distinction did not rule out the possibility that ecclesiastical tolerance in the dominant church, if implemented with sufficient latitude, could render civil tolerance superfluous; nor did it rule out the possibility that full civil toleration could lead to the formation of a universal church. Even Barbeyrac left open the prospect that religious unity could be realized in a (far-off) future. Diversity, he claimed in §§ xxxv–xxxvii of his *Traité de la morale des Pères*, will ultimately lead to the truth being sifted out. In this way, argued Barbeyrac, toleration can lead to a measure of religious concord. In the meantime, God has decreed that there shall be diversity (1 Cor. 11:19), so that mankind will learn to exercise modesty and love. The conservative streak in Barbeyrac's *Traité de la morale des Pères* could, and in the United Provinces did, lead to ambiguous interpretations. Orthodox divines (such as Van den Honert and Barueth) hailed Barbeyrac as an equitable defender of the public church in the same way as they had embraced Noodt. Dissenters, on the other hand, stressed his defence of the rights of the individual conscience.

In general, Barbeyrac's writings afforded the means to dispute the authority of the public clergy. For example, his *Discours sur la permission des lois* (1715) was used to demonstrate that civil virtue could be realized only through (free) religion, and not through the drafting of laws. Laws are insufficient from the point of view of morality, which is why it is not seemly for an honest man to make use of all the rights granted by laws.<sup>189</sup> The implication was that the established clergy should not make use of its public authority to enforce conformity. Then there was Barbeyrac's academic address of 1721, *De magistratu forte peccante, a pulpitis sacris non traducendo*, an attack on clerical pretensions which remained part and parcel of the Dutch toleration debate throughout the century.<sup>190</sup> Later, the Huguenot Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui (1694–1748) similarly argued in his *Principes du droit politique* (1751) that the official religion should be subject to the authority of the state, and that an independent ecclesiastical power could not be tolerated.<sup>191</sup> The Mennonite Marten Schagen, incidentally, translated Burlamaqui's *Principes du droit naturel* (1747), which itself contained references to Grotius, Pufendorf, Barbeyrac,

<sup>189</sup> *De Denker* IV (1767), 49–56. A similar argument in *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, X (1758), 161–168.

<sup>190</sup> Van Eijnatten, 'Swiss anticlericalism.'

<sup>191</sup> D.tr. J.J. Burlamaqui, *Beginsels van het burgerlyk regt* (1752).



and Samuel Clarke.<sup>192</sup> Other writers of Huguenot descent, such as the Dutch publicist Elie Luzac, radicalized these arguments. In his anonymous *Essai sur la liberté de produire ses sentimens* (1749), he expressed the hope that the sovereign would for once and for ever silence theologians bickering among each other about irrelevant things. Reviewed in the francophone press, the treatise was not often referred to by Dutch writers, although the Patriots produced a translation in 1782 to further their own cause and embarrass Luzac.<sup>193</sup>

It may be concluded that Dutch natural law scholars generally supported the confessional public in its latitudinarian version. These theories were, after all, adduced by academics who worked in a field laden with political sensitivities; in this sense, natural law theorists were closely affiliated to the magisterial republicans discussed in section 5.1. From within this latitudinarian tradition it was, however, possible to develop views that supported the libertarian claims of the polite public. Barbeyrac's ideas on conscience are a case in point. We shall illustrate some aspects of this development in the next section.

## 5.6 SEEDS SOWN BY TIRION AND THOMASIIUS

The Tirion edition, which we have already encountered several times, was an anthology of five texts published in 1734 as the *Collection of several tracts on toleration and freedom of worship*. One of the publishers was a Mennonite, Isaac Tirion (1705–1765), a major figure in the Dutch-language book-trade, and one of the governors of the Collegiant orphanage at Amsterdam.<sup>194</sup> The book was a significant event in the history of the Dutch toleration debate. A cheap octavo edition, it made available Dutch translations of John Locke's *Epistola de tolerantia*, Gerard Noodt's address *De religione ab imperio iure gentium libera*, the twelfth chapter (on toleration) of Jean Barbeyrac's *Traité de la*

<sup>192</sup> D.tr. J.J. Burlamaqui, *Beginsels van het natuurlyk regt* (1750).

<sup>193</sup> D.tr. [E. Luzac], *Onderzoek over de vryheid, van zyne gevoelens mede te deelen* (1782). Velema, *Enlightenment and conservatism*, 15–22.

<sup>194</sup> *Verzameling van eenige verhandelungen over de verdraagzaamheid en vryheid van godsdienst* (1734); see Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 57–59, where I have attributed the translations to Drieberge. Wessels, *Bron, waarheid en de verandering der tijden*, 562, attributes the translations of Barbeyrac and Hoadly to Jan Wagenaar, who is also a likely candidate.

*morale des Pères*, Benjamin Hoadly's sermon on *The nature of the Kingdom or Church of Christ*, and a sermon by Johannes Dierberge. The Tirion edition was reissued forty years later in an enlarged version entitled *The freedom of religion in civil society argued from and defended by the law of nature and peoples, and the nature of the Christian religion* (1774).<sup>195</sup> In this section we shall first examine the enlarged Tirion edition, commenting on a treatise by an Arminian, Van der Meersch. Subsequently we shall discuss the work of the most radical professor of law in the Dutch Republic, Van der Marck.

The editor of the enlarged Tirion edition was Abraham Arent van der Meersch (1720–1792), the leading Remonstrant theologian of the second half of the eighteenth century, one of Dierberge's pupils, and Frans van Limborch's son-in-law. Van der Meersch was a translator, journalist, spectatorial writer, scholar, and a professor of philosophy and theology at the Remonstrant Seminary in Amsterdam who inaugurated with an address *De mentis humanae libertate* (1756). Van der Meersch achieved renown by translating writings by Warburton, Mosheim and Nicolai, and began his scholarly career with a much-acclaimed, annotated Dutch translation of Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica*.<sup>196</sup> To his reissue of Tirion's collection of texts Van der Meersch added a new Dutch translation of Locke's *Second letter concerning toleration*, as well as most of the footnotes appended by Barbeyrac to Noodt's address.<sup>197</sup> He also wrote a substantial, seventy-page introduction to the new Tirion edition, in which he discussed the principles of religious freedom and the *ius circa sacra*. We shall turn to this introduction now, since it provides a neat summary of developments in the eighteenth-century natural law tradition.<sup>198</sup>

To understand the principles underlying religious liberty, observed

<sup>195</sup> [A.A. van der Meersch ed.], *De vryheid van godsdienst in de burgerlyke maatschappij* (1774). An extensive critical review in *NB* 1774/II-i, 142–156, 207–225.

<sup>196</sup> Eusebius, *Kerkebyke geschiedenissen* (1749); the translation contains a preface by Albert Voget (1695–1771), a theology professor at Utrecht, who took care to distance himself from any doctrinal views peculiar to the translator. In his own preface, Van der Meersch himself took the opportunity of pointing out that we should not accept doctrines merely on authority; as Eusebius shows, the Church fathers were fallible people. For the translations of Mosheim and Nicolai, see sections 6.3 and 7.1 below. Warburton's *The divine legation of Moses* (1737–41) was translated as *De goddebyke zending van Mozes* (1778). On Warburton, see Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in eighteenth-century England*, 167–212.

<sup>197</sup> Van Eijnatten, 'Gerard Noodt's standing.'

<sup>198</sup> Van der Meersch used the cryptical pseudonym 'R.D.B.G.D.I.H.M.V.'

Van der Meersch in his introduction, it is necessary first to examine the origins, the aims, and the authority of civil society. Man is by nature a sociable being. He possesses the natural proclivity to socialize and exercise benevolence and compassion. His intellectual and moral faculties are best led to perfection in community with others, and his notions of virtue and justice incline him to society. Hence, as Aristotle pointed out, in primitive times people sought each other's company. Household fathers retained their natural freedom and independence, and this situation would have continued indefinitely if mankind had persisted in performing its natural duties of benevolence, compassion, sociability, justice, virtue, and religion. However, men began to give in to their desire to pursue happiness to the detriment of their obligations. This caused injustice and violence, and for this reason it was necessary to establish civil society. The aim of civil society is, then, to ensure the safety of the bodies, freedoms and possessions of citizens against internal and external violence and injustice. To fulfil this aim, society members were required to surrender part of their natural freedom. Citizens had to submit to the will of the majority and appoint representatives, invested with the authority of the community, to attend political meetings. To what extent is it possible to surrender the original natural rights to freedom and independence? A right can only be relinquished if it is lawful to do so, and only when it is necessary. From this it follows that contemporary civil society still possesses all the original freedoms of the primitive community, barring those that had to be renounced in order to guarantee communal safety. Government authority must be exerted exclusively to protect citizens and foster the temporal well-being of society, but only to the degree in which society members have renounced their natural rights.<sup>199</sup>

How do these principles apply to religion? The exercise of religion, the respect for and fear of Providence, is a natural duty. In the primitive community under the law of nature, men were free to hold their own peculiar religious views, as they were free to entertain any opinion. They had the freedom (and, as human beings, the obligation) to instruct, advise, reprimand and edify each other, and nobody had the right to determine anyone else's beliefs. Household fathers also had the liberty to establish congregations. This situation

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<sup>199</sup> Van der Meersch, in: *De vryheid van godsdienst*, 1-X.

did not change with the establishment of civil society, since the aims of society do not require the renunciation of religious freedom. It is therefore certain, concluded Van der Meersch with an oblique reference to Noodt, that religion is free from domination. Besides, the durability of civil society depends on the loyalty of its citizens, and loyalty is a virtue that depends in part on religion. It would be politically unwise to deny religious freedom to citizens. It is also wrong to assume, as a 'very learned man' recently did, that there can be an 'Alliance or contract of Union' between civil society on the one hand, and a religious society comprising the majority of citizens on the other. Van der Meersch was evidently criticizing Warburton's *The alliance between Church and state* (1736),<sup>200</sup> a major Anglican defence of the legitimacy of a dominant church.

This does not mean that the state has nothing to do with religion. On the contrary, it is in the state's interest to maintain and promote religion. Since civil society rests on a voluntary agreement between members, since agreements can only be made if the members are trustworthy, and since trustworthiness is a fruit of religion, it follows that religion is the foundation of civil society. Moreover, only religion can ensure the felicity of the members of society (felicity, Van der Meersch assures his readers, is a central aim of society). The government is bound to aid and encourage religion, but only in a very general, naturalistic sense, as a common belief in providence, the distinction between moral good and evil, and divine retribution. It certainly is not useful to decree the maintenance of particular tenets. For all we know, we may be establishing an error, or perpetuating uncivilized, useless and injurious things. Besides, the truth has much to gain from freedom of inquiry. The road to perfection is a long and tortuous one, and full of pitfalls. Only when we have reached its end will we be able to determine which particular tenets have been correct. In short, the obligation, interests, and liberty of civil society converge in the establishment of a general, naturalistic religion.<sup>201</sup> How, then, should the government act in religious matters? In a civil society divided into different denominations, the government is obliged to favour and protect each denom-

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<sup>200</sup> Van der Meersch, in: *De vryheid van godsdienst*, X–XX. Warburton's book remained untranslated, but was discussed in francophone periodicals, see Schillings, *Tolerantiedebat*, 87–88.

<sup>201</sup> Van der Meersch, in: *De vryheid van godsdienst*, XXI–XXVIII.

ination equally, claims Van der Meersch. The Christian religion, which is ideally suited to advance the well-being of society, has no need for protection by secular authorities. After all, the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world. On the other hand, a Christian nation does have the right to accept Christianity as the 'universal Religion of the people.' Several conditions will have to be met, however. The universal religion must be unanimously confessed, non-Christians (Jews and Muslims) should be free to confess their own faiths, and any Christian who wishes to found a particular denomination must be allowed to do so without having to fear for the loss of his civil privileges, freedoms or benefits. At any rate, it is clear that Christianity is the best guarantee for maintaining the natural religion, and that it further promotes the virtues that ensure the well-being of the state. Such virtues are, above all, peace and concord, for Christianity forbids political and religious dissension and recommends charity, leniency and forbearance. Van der Meersch (advocating a less conservative solution than he had found in Warburton's *Alliance*) evidently favoured the establishment of 'one universal Religious Society', in which the government would have the right to appoint a peaceful and tolerant clergy. Only *particular* religious societies possess the right to appoint their own clergies. The Roman Catholic church (and, by inference, the Reformed) is a case in point, and it should be permitted to exercise its prerogatives freely unless it proves to be dangerous to the state.<sup>202</sup>

History teaches us that governments and clergies have often oppressed 'Freedom and Religion'. Although it is wrong to claim that religion is simply a political hoax, it is clear that governments have frequently misused their authority in religious matters. The root cause of this abuse is the ancient heathen prejudice that sovereign powers are entitled to establish state religions. This prejudice was strengthened under the Roman emperors when Christians started to work out doctrinal systems, and it became a matter of course under Papal rule. The Reformers sought to restore 'natural and Christian liberty.' Since they had no inkling of natural law (Grotius had not yet written his *De iure belli ac pacis*), they modelled the state after the Old Testament and began to write confessions of faith, which they expected the state to protect. Through the wisdom and moderation

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<sup>202</sup> Van der Meersch, in: *De vryheid van godsdienst*, XXX-XXXIX.

of the high authorities, religious freedom was preserved better in the United Provinces than elsewhere. Van der Meersch, who in the 1770s was involved in a conflict with the Calvinist clergy, hoped that the States of Holland would continue to defend religious liberty wisely and prudently.<sup>203</sup> Van der Meersch, in short, took the natural law argument one step further than Noodt and Barbeyrac, and reached a conclusion similar to Van Slingelandt. He remained true to the Arminian tradition, although he radicalized it by arguing from natural law and natural theology. Even then, the Mennonite Allard Hulshoff regarded Van der Meersch's essay as conservative—and necessarily so, he said, for if one wanted to get results, one simply had to compromise. He was more excited, however, about the *Lectiones academicae* of the law professor Van der Marck.<sup>204</sup>

The reputation of Frederik Adolf van der Marck (1719–1800) as a *flagellum theologorum* had preceded him when he was appointed professor of constitutional, natural and international law at Groningen in 1758.<sup>205</sup> He was not a man given to reticence or timidity. Installed at the Academy, he immediately caused misgivings at the theological faculty by displaying an excessive interest in natural divinity; and he gave rise to qualms at the law faculty by showing an all too meagre interest in the Roman pandects. In his inaugural speech, he made three things quite clear. As a law scholar, he would emphasize the philosophical basis of natural law over revealed theology, favour natural and national law over Roman law, and demand intellectual freedom. Van der Marck was a successful academic. A large number of students as well as men of high social and political rank attended his lectures, which in due course inspired the founding of an influential law society called *Pro excolendo iure patrio*. Although his ideas were not undisputed, and he was called to task several times by his critics, things did not come to a head until the early 1770s. The drama—actually the final stage in a series of conflicts—began in December 1771, when the classis of Groningen sent a complaint to the curators of the Academy concerning the first volume of Van der Marck's *Lectiones Academicae*, which had just been published. The law professor was generally accused of emphasizing man's natural

<sup>203</sup> Van der Meersch, in: *De vryheid van godsdienst*, XXXIX–LXX.

<sup>204</sup> MS Leiden BPL 1160, letter by Allard Hulshoff, dd. 29–7–1776.

<sup>205</sup> For the following, see Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck*; Jansen, *Natuurrecht of Romeins recht*.

capacities over divine grace, denying particular grace and the consequences of the Fall, and arguing that the church had been instituted by man rather than God. After numerous grievances, procedures, insinuations, defences, and requests, Van der Marck was dismissed by the Senate of the same university where Barbeyrac had been allowed to work unhampered for so many years. The conflict had repercussions throughout the Netherlands. Writers discussed the various disputes he had caused in pamphlets, poems, spectators, journals, and letters, with exotic pseudonyms ranging from ‘Alethinus Eusebeiphilus’ to ‘Christianus Aretophilus’. A short-lived periodical called *The educating moralist on the necessity of natural laws* was founded at Groningen, while in a French-language satire Barbeyrac praised Van der Marck’s independence of mind from beyond the grave. The ‘Tolerants’ could add another martyr to their list.

Van der Marck ended up in Lingen, as a law professor at an insignificant academy. Here, however, Frederick the Great held sway, and he was not required (as he observed) to teach according to Voet’s *Politica ecclesiastica*. In 1783, Van der Marck accepted a professorship at Deventer. There he showed himself to be an ardent Patriot; when the Dutch revolution failed, Van der Marck was expelled. This time he left for Burgsteinfurt, a small German principality between Münster and Osnabrück, not far from the Dutch borders, ruled by the count of Bentheim-Steinfurt-Tecklenburg-Limburg. The count, who entertained progressive views, in 1789 solemnly declared that all Dutch emigrants who had fled the United Provinces following the restoration of the stadtholderly regime would be welcome in his territory. He appointed Van der Marck as a professor at the *Gymnasium Arnoldinum*. Van der Marck he returned to Groningen in 1795, where he had the satisfaction of being ceremoniously re-installed.

Van der Marck was a prolific writer, but we need only concern ourselves with the sections of his *Lectiones Academicæ* relating to ecclesiastical law. He had already expressed his views regarding the church in the inaugural address he had held at Duisburg in 1748, adorning it with references to Noodt.<sup>206</sup> Some two decades later he began to treat ecclesiastical law according to the principles of natural law.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> The address is discussed in Blom, “‘Zet de ramen open!’”.

<sup>207</sup> *Theses juris ecclesiastici protestantium universalis* (1765).

Orthodox divines must have frowned on the kind of theses defended under his supervision. For example, Johannes Campstede (1748–1827), one of his pupils at Groningen who later followed him to Lingen to become professor of philosophy and mathematics, argued not only that the persecution of heresy was godless, but also that the inquisitors themselves were punishable for causing social disorder.<sup>208</sup> Later, when another pupil was mentioned as a possible candidate for the philosophical chair at Groningen, the divine Petrus Hofstede personally notified Willem V that the beliefs of Van der Marck's followers were largely limited to some form of natural religion. The erstwhile law professor had already corrupted the youth, claiming that it was perfectly legal to alter existing constitutions.<sup>209</sup> As for Van der Marck himself, he considered natural law a useful instrument by which to subdue the clergy. Human formularies, he said in 1770, can never apply to natural law, and students of natural law require complete freedom of inquiry. However, to Van der Marck natural law was more than just a means to combat the traditional clergy. It provided a God-given standard of truth and formed the basis for an orderly and equitable society. Natural law, he stated, is concerned with the magnificent order of the universe itself, not with the narrow scholastic systems fabricated by the clergy.<sup>210</sup> Apart from his notoriously impetuous temperament, his spirited perseverance in defending his position was as much the result of personal conviction as a nagging Nicodemism. He had signed the formularies in 1758 but did not in conscience support them, and had been obliged to convince a highly sceptical academic board that he did. Significantly, it was reputed that Van der Marck had been advised to do what Buffon had done in his *Histoire naturelle*: to recant his errors publicly in such a derisive manner that it would not really be believed. For a choleric law professor living in a supposedly free Republic this was, of course, a spurious strategy, and he refused.<sup>211</sup>

The second volume of the *Lectiones Academicæ* was published in three parts, one at Groningen before the author's formal discharge

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<sup>208</sup> Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck*, 40. In his oration at Lingen (*De perfectionibus Divinis*, 1774), Campstede mentioned the persecution and oppression to which his former teacher had been subjected.

<sup>209</sup> Schutte, 'Beschermer van Gods kerk', 153–155; the pupil was C.M. Merkelbach.

<sup>210</sup> Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck*, 38, 62.

<sup>211</sup> Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck*, 86.



in 1772, and two at Lingen in 1775 and 1776.<sup>212</sup> In the first part of the second volume, Van der Marck discussed the importance of religion to the state, religious liberty as a natural right, the right of different religions to be tolerated in the state, and the obligation of the prince to tolerate them. He argued that all religions are orthodox with respect to the state, that heretics are those who foster religious discontent in the state, and that Old Testament laws did not apply to the United Provinces. He praised Frederick II, Catharine II and William IV for their tolerant views,<sup>213</sup> and quoted the letter sent by the States General to Venice in 1725.<sup>214</sup> The third part of the *Lectiones* is concerned, among other things, with ecclesiastical discipline. It is, however, the second part of the *Lectiones* that is the most interesting. Van der Marck scrutinized the church and its relations to the state. He provided sufficient dynamite to demolish any 'dominant' church, and his efforts were rewarded with a devastating review of some forty pages in an orthodox review periodical.<sup>215</sup> In his lectures on the nature of the church, he contended that the universal church is a natural society deriving from the order of the universe, and therefore subject to natural law, although its aim, which is the perfection of the universe, requires the intervention of grace. The 'inward' church, he claimed, is wholly independent of human power, so that excommunication is illegitimate. Since natural law is the bond of Christendom and the basis of the church's unity, Christian harmony can be obtained by obeying the law of nature rather than adjusting formularies here and there. Van der Marck claimed that because there is one universal internal church, and because the external church is a means of gaining access to it, there really should be only one external church based on certain fundamental doctrines.

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<sup>212</sup> F.A. van der Marck, *Lectionum Academicarum tomus secundus, quo praecipua juris ecclesiastici protestantium universalis capita pertractantur* [*Lectiones Academicae*] (1772–1776). The motto of volume II-i was taken from the *Discours historiques, critiques & politiques sur Tacite* (1742) by the English republican Thomas Gordon: 'C'est à ce St. Evangile que je souhaite sincèrement (. . .) mais j'avoue que je trouve fort peu de marques de cette affection Evangelique, dans la conduite, les discours et les Ecrits de ceux qui ont attaqué leurs adversaires sur des opinions de Religion.'

<sup>213</sup> *Lectiones Academicae* II-i, 124–125. Later Van der Marck would observe that Frederick II was a strong monarch who was therefore able to keep the clergy in check, and that the Dutch stadtholders were weak and therefore could not; see his *Schets over de rechten van den mensch*, XII.

<sup>214</sup> Van der Meersch had also quoted the letter in his introduction to the revised Tirion edition; on the letter to Venice, see section 4.1 above.

<sup>215</sup> *NB* 1776-i, 423–439, 612–637.

This church must be very tolerant and recognize that most differences merely result from a wrong choice of words. However, the *odium theologicum* has led to divisions within the universal church, and to confessions of faith cataloguing doctrines unbeknownst to the early Christians. Protestants, moreover, recognize only Scripture as the true rule of faith; Van der Marck demonstrated the illegitimacy of formularies in no less than twenty extensive theses. Their general drift is that the universal church is a natural society, and therefore subject only to the law of nature, which has been put forward most clearly by Jesus Christ; that the imposition of formularies is tantamount to mutiny in Christ's Kingdom; that to enforce confessions of faith in religion is as absurd as implementing them in nature; that natural law and Revelation are the two pillars of Christendom, and that differences among Christians are as insignificant as differences between law scholars; that no one is orthodox unless he is truly pious, but that formularies prevent such piety; that formularies are the result of a majority vote and are only subscribed to by memorizing certain clerical opinions; and that all formularies contain errors, so that sincere subscription is impossible. Van der Marck concluded that Christendom is conducive to both civil and ecclesiastical toleration, and that Lutherans, Calvinists, Mennonites and Remonstrants could easily form a single church.

In a subsequent lecture, Van der Marck discussed fundamental articles. He reduced them, as one might have expected, to the Hobbesian-Lockean dictum that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the human race. This, he argued, is the objective basis of salvation; doctrines merely constitute a subjective foundation. It is up to theologians to determine which further articles result from this first principle, as the basis of a unified external church. Van der Marck praised the union between Lutherans and Calvinists in Prussia, and observed that in the United Provinces such a union would certainly be advantageous. To make religious concord possible, the clergy will have to become more lenient and professors of ecclesiastical law who are also versed in natural law must be appointed at the Dutch academies. Van der Marck continued with a lecture on the territorial establishment of the church. He claimed that from a theological point of view, Christ is the head of the established church. From an ecclesiastical point of view, however, the church is supervised either by the people (in the state of nature) or by the magistracy (in the civil state). As to the organization of the church, the Bible provides

no guidelines. It is clear, however, that Christians possess the natural freedom to prophesy and that household fathers have the natural right to administer sacraments. The contemporary distinction between clergy and laity actually applies only to apostolic times, when religious leaders were divinely inspired. Nowadays clerical privileges are solely the result of a voluntary transfer of human authority. Nor did the early church have any need for distinctive clerical epithets (Reformed divines sometimes referred to themselves as ‘Nazarenes’) or for the professional clothing worn by the clergy. These are monkish inventions, and the result of ambition and superstition.

The church should be unilaterally governed by the state. Van der Marck devoted a whole lecture to refuting Constantine the Great’s claim that he derived his authority over the church from his ‘internal’, episcopal power. These powers, claimed the law professor, originate not in the church, but in the *ius maiestaticum*. The secular authority of the ruler includes the power to enforce the external rights of the church by coercion, and to foster the internal rights of the church by persuasive means (such as founding public schools for proper religious education and paying salaries to suitable teachers and pastors). Unfortunately, the introduction by Constantine of the distinction between external and internal power over the church led to an undue proliferation of clerical authority. Who, questioned Van der Marck, decides on the contents of ecclesiastical doctrine? If a decision has to be made at all (and this is necessary only when society threatens to be upset), the prince is the one who must decide publicly to maintain the one or the other doctrine. The orthodoxy thus instituted is purely civil, and neither theological nor ecclesiastical. The gist, then, of Van der Marck’s views on church law was the contention that theocracy must be rejected; that the clergy can lay claim to no rights in excess of the ones they have received from the church, which is not divinely instituted but a society like any other; that only God possesses the *imperium religionis*; that the state must tolerate all religions (deists, Muslims and heathens, ‘et quos non?’);<sup>216</sup> and that the government determines which religion is dominant, and establishes its organization, rules, and doctrine. Van der Marck’s secularization of ecclesiastical law was more radical than anything envisaged by his predecessor Barbeyrac.

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<sup>216</sup> *Lectiones Academicæ* II-i, 89.

This, in the opinion of the orthodox, was Erastianism running amok. Van der Marck was a formidable opponent, whose logic remained intact despite the superfluity of digressions and repetitions that characterize his work. Given the general principles of natural law from which he argued, there was little the Calvinist clergy could do other than point out that these principles were very wrong. The fact that Van der Marck believed to be fighting a just cause made him no less significant. If he was prone to over-estimating himself, he was also something of an idealist. When the law professor was still licking his wounds in Nijmegen in 1773, he wrote to an unidentified friend about his plan to establish a fund for 'Tolerants' who were dismissed or otherwise oppressed on account of their 'moderate principles'.<sup>217</sup> It was said that Van der Marck's adversaries at Groningen were not really interested in his heresies, but that it was his attack on 'the Hierarchical system of Voetius', the code of ecclesiastical law still used by most ministers, which most infuriated the clergy.<sup>218</sup> Not surprisingly, he held close contacts with the Dutch Vitringians. Manger at Franeker, having received the second, most controversial part of the *Lectiones*, wrote back that he was pleased with the arguments against 'Hierarchy', and that he particularly valued the chapter *De tolerantia*. The principles laid down by Van der Marck were undisputable, Manger believed, and needed only to be put into practice. But that was precisely the problem, observed Manger. Putting principles into practice required further determination of the nature of fundamental articles, an issue that was still so mixed up with human factions and passions that it was unlikely to be adequately resolved. Manger inferred that as far as he was concerned, predestination was not a fundamental issue. He went on, however, to defend the notion of a divinely instituted church against Van der Marck's claim that the church was a solely human organization.<sup>219</sup> Ewald Hollebeek, a Vitringian at Leiden, made a similar point. Jan Jacob Schultens, on the other hand, did not criticize the book at all.<sup>220</sup>

The authorities sparsely quoted in the *Lectiones* included Pufendorf, Thomasius, Justus Henning Böhmer (the *Ius ecclesiasticum protestantium*,

<sup>217</sup> MS Leiden BPL 1160, letter by Van der Marck, dd. 8-6-1773.

<sup>218</sup> MS Leiden BPL 1160, letter by J.J. Schultens, Leiden, dd. 5-12-1776.

<sup>219</sup> MS Leiden BPL 1160, letter by S.H. Manger, dd. 6-7-1776.

<sup>220</sup> MS Leiden BPL 1160, letter by E. Hollebeek, Leiden, dd. 24-2-1776; letter by J.J. Schultens, dd. 5-12-1776.

1714–1737), Budde, Pfaff, Werenfels (including his dissertation *De iure in conscientias ab homine non usurpando*), Locke, Noodt, Barbeyrac (particularly his claim that the clergy are ignorant of natural law, to the detriment of the church), and Bayle and Brandt (both for historical facts). Lecture XVIII contained a summary of *Papa Ultrajectinus* (1656) by Louis du Moulin, an attack on what that seventeenth-century Huguenot had regarded as Voet's attempt to establish an *imperium in imperio*. Lecture XXIV was devoted to a full refutation of Voet's *Politica ecclesiastica*, and Lecture XXV to an inquiry into the extent to which the Voetian system was comparable to the Roman Catholic. Van der Marck appreciated Mosheim's *Allgemeines Kirchenrecht der Protestanten* (1760), which he used to point out that apostolic canon law did not apply to the contemporary clergy.<sup>221</sup> Nevertheless, in Lecture XXVI he noted that Mosheim himself was contaminated with *independentismus Ecclesiasticus*. Van der Marck was, if anything, an eclectic. He derived his ideas on natural law from a broad range of authors, including, above all, Christian Wolff. He claimed to be an anti-Hobbesian, to follow Grotius more than he did Pufendorf, and in some respects to value Wolff more highly than Grotius. With regard to toleration, he regarded himself as a follower of Barbeyrac. He could not be regarded as a disciple of Thomasius, he observed, except for his views on ecclesiastical law.<sup>222</sup> Actually, Van der Marck must have looked on himself as a second Thomasius, who had similarly been evicted from a university by overweening clerics, and had subsequently travelled the road to academic glory under the patronage of a Prussian king. Van der Marck's views on church law were undoubtedly much indebted to Thomasius. His wholesale rejection of the prince's so-called episcopal rights reflects Thomasius' attack on Lutheran 'collegialist' theory, of which Mosheim was a major recent proponent, and which sought to define an area of relative independence for the church. Thomasius himself defended the 'territorialist' view, according to which the prince's rights over the church were derived unilaterally from the *ius maiestaticum*.<sup>223</sup> This position was elaborated on by the pro-absolutist German *Aufklärer* of Van der

<sup>221</sup> Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck*, 32; *D.tr.* J.L. Mosheim, *Algemeen kerkenrecht der protestanten* (1765).

<sup>222</sup> Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck*, 182.

<sup>223</sup> For the views of Thomasius and Mosheim, see Stroup, *The struggle for identity in the clerical estate*, 43–82.

Marck's generation, and it is above all the latter group who should be seen as his main source of inspiration. His attempt to secularize the clergy is illustrated by his stress on natural law as a suitable replacement for much superfluous theology. Hence, also, his regard for Cicero, to whose pagan authority he often appealed with a view to strengthening the position of natural law.<sup>224</sup> Hence, finally, his pleas for reforming the curriculum by incorporating traditional theological fields into the law faculty. A proper academic, he wrote, ought to excel in logic, metaphysics, philosophy, physics and mathematics as well as natural law, canon law and the principles of the *ius Mozaicum* (in order that the latter not be misrepresented by the clergy).<sup>225</sup>

The significance of this outspoken anticlerical critic lies in the fact that he dared to go public. Like Van der Meersch (who probably made use of his writings), Van der Marck was in favour of a dominant church, but made so many allowances that the outcome of his juridical ruminations was religious plurality based on natural theology. The title of his final contribution to the cause of mankind reveals the way in which his earlier efforts to reconstruct the confessional state in terms of natural law had developed into a politico-religious conception based on the polite and educated citizen. His *Sketch of the rights of man* appeared in 1798, two years before his death.<sup>226</sup> Discussing ecclesiastical, constitutional and international law, he emphasized the fact that natural law scholars had always tried to control those who sought to prevent the 'further *enlightenment of a People*.' For this was the new order ultimately envisaged by Van der Marck. Not a state presided over by an absolute Thomasian prince, but a nation of reasonable, sociable and pious citizens, who could be depended on to foster equity and equality in the state. This was the ideological basis of the polite public, to which we shall now turn.

<sup>224</sup> Zwolve, 'Frederik Adolf van der Marck en Marcus Tullius Cicero'. Cf. Gawlick, 'Cicero and the Enlightenment'; Van de Zande, 'In the image of Cicero'.

<sup>225</sup> ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by Van der Marck (dd. Nijmegen, 11-8-1773).

<sup>226</sup> F.A. van der Marck, *Schets over de rechten van den mensch* (1798).

## 5.7 THE POLITICIZATION OF PEACE

We have seen that some votaries of the 'true republican' tradition, men like Lieven de Beaufort, Daniel van Alphen and Petrus Burman Jr., commented explicitly on the relations between political liberty and religious freedom. Later in the eighteenth century, religious radicals similarly held strong views on political liberty. This, however, is where the comparison ends. The later religious radicals were no wealthy armchair critics with a penchant for elitist anticlericalism, but fervent Christian believers quite prepared to suffer for the good cause. They were usually dissenting ministers or publicists (many of whom died in poverty) rather than persons of public authority and political power, and they entertained democratic ideas that went way beyond the political notions any republican in the magisterial tradition would have been prepared to defend. Curiously, despite several recent studies, very little effort has been made in Dutch historiography to link the religious and political ideals of this group of disaffected, 'Patriotic' republicans.<sup>227</sup> In this section such an attempt will be made. First the general connections between religion and politics will be briefly commented on. Subsequently the writings of several radical Patriots will be reviewed, in particular those of Bernard Bosch and Gerrit Bacot.

It is arguable that the religious radicalism of this group of Patriots directly reflected their pursuit of political emancipation, and vice versa. The demand for subordination to government in traditional political doctrine mirrored the concept of a confessional public sphere, which required public submission to orthodox doctrines. Petrus Hofstede, writing in 1747, observed that a government is necessary because man by nature is sinful. Man is withheld from total depravity by God's restraining grace, remnants of reason, shame, fear of eternal punishment, but especially by the dread for penalties imposed by the government. Government, however, forms an organic unity with the church. They are as closely united as body and soul. Disunity in the one leads to discord in the other. Should there be 'strife in

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<sup>227</sup> Klein, *Patriots republikanisme* concentrates wholly on political issues; a useful outline of changes in the *political* vocabulary concerning 'liberty' during the 1780s is Velema, 'From the rule of law'. Provisory discussions of the link between *Patriot* religion and politics are Schutte, *Patriotten, prinsgezinden, gereformeerden*; Van den Berg, 'Hervormden, dissenters en de patriottenbeweging'.

the *Church*; should false teachings be spread, *Government* will be enfeebled, yes, sometimes even wholly corrupted; for *Religion* is the soul of the *State*'.<sup>228</sup> It has been contended that the ideological foundations of the eighteenth-century English state were provided by orthodox Trinitarian theology, and that Unitarianism offered the intellectual ammunition by which the authoritarian claims of the established Anglican Church were contested.<sup>229</sup> The claim seems too bold; political radicalism (the call for representative democracy) was to some extent paralleled by theological radicalism (particularly Unitarianism), but the connection between the two was never a necessary one.<sup>230</sup> The question is, of course, whether the exclusive focus on Trinitarianism is justified, and whether the emphasis should not simply be on attempts to undermine the 'confessional public sphere' as such. In Hofstede's view, anyone who subverted accepted doctrine was undermining the state, whether he did so by denying the Trinity or any other fundamental dogma. Denying the Trinity was certainly inexcusable. Even the democrat Van der Marck appears to have thought it better not to comment extensively on the Unitarian confession sent to him from Leiden by a Transylvanian student, Stephanus Lazàr de Torotzko, who had just been refused a doctorate because of his beliefs.<sup>231</sup> Conversely, to the poet Willem Bilderdijk (1756–1831), who in the revolutionary 1780s began a lengthy career devoted to criticizing democracy and heterodoxy, Trinitarianism had become a badge of political conservatism and religious orthodoxy.<sup>232</sup> Yet for

<sup>228</sup> P. Hofstede, *De welgelukzaligheid van een land, wiens koning een zoone der edelen is* [*The blessedness of a land whose king is a son of nobles*] (1747), 20, 46–47 (nt. b).

<sup>229</sup> Clarke, *English Society 1688–1832*.

<sup>230</sup> Waterman, 'The nexus between theology and political doctrine.'

<sup>231</sup> ms Leiden BPL 1160 (dd. Lingen, 2–7–1774). Apologies for Trinitarianism as such seem to have been less important in the Dutch context; they especially appeared later in the century, in response to German writers. Cf. Josua van Iperen (1726–1780), *Nauwkeurig en beknopt onderzoek naar alle de byzonderheden en lotgevallen van het leerstuk der Heilige Drie-eenheid* [*Careful and concise inquiry into the details and vicissitudes of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity*] (1761); C. Pantekoeck, *Amoenitates theologicae* (1787), II; Herman Royaards, *Diatribè de divinitate Jesu Christi vera* (1791). Cf. also *NB* 1775-ii, 137–140 and *NB* 1786-ii, 220–231, with essays on Arianism; *VB* 1793-ii, 241–252, with an essay on the Trinity by Jacobus Kramer (1723–1808); also various treatises in the *PGVCG* of the 1790s. The most important Unitarian scandal is discussed in Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*; see also De Groot, 'Sozianismus in Harderwijk?' The Lutheran Augustus Sterk, a pupil of Semler, was accused of denying the Trinity in a sermon, an allegation he tried to counter in his *Leerredenen over verschillende onderwerpen* [*Sermons on various topics*] (1787), II, and other writings.

<sup>232</sup> Van Eijnatten, *Hogere sferen*, 513–697; Van Eijnatten, 'Vestige of the Third



Bilderdijk, too, Trinitarianism was only one fundamental doctrine among several.<sup>233</sup>

Be that as it may, religious heterodoxy and political radicalism often made pleasant bedfellows, as is evidenced by some leading figures of the *Patriottentijd*. One need think only of François Adriaan van der Kemp (1752–1829), one of the more radical pupils tutored by Van der Marck at Groningen. Van der Kemp's allowance as a student was stopped when he began to entertain controversial religious ideas, and it was said that when this hard-up undergraduate sold his library, professor Chevallier bought the whole collection of French deists to prevent their being circulated. He corresponded with the well-known English Unitarian Joshua Toulmin (1740–1815), and was, in fact, a convinced anti-Trinitarian himself.<sup>234</sup> He left the Groningen academy in 1773 for the Mennonite school in Amsterdam, and was (re-)baptized the next year.<sup>235</sup> If anyone was capable of politicizing the pulpit during the *Patriottentijd*, it was Van der Kemp. Having delivered his (politically-charged) sermons in the morning, he used to hurry to his free corps for his weaponry exercises. Van der Kemp was obliged to flee in 1787, and became a farmer in the United States.

Alternatively, take the mysterious storyteller known as 'J.A. Schasz, medical doctor'. It has been suggested that Schasz was a pseudonym for Pieter 't Hoen (1744–1828), the editor of the *Post from the Nether-Rhine*. 't Hoen had written a number of anti-English plays in favour of the American rebellion, became a militant Patriot activist in the 1780s, left the Republic in 1787 for France, and returned in 1795 only to be side-tracked in his ambition to serve the new regime.

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Force'. Note that there was a relation between conservatives like Bilderdijk and the Lutheran-Calvinist *Deutsche Christentum Gesellschaft*, which had a branch in the Netherlands and was known in Germany for its Protestant orthodoxy and its opposition to the French Revolution; see Im Hof, 'German associations and politics', 216.

<sup>233</sup> For a radical denial of the Trinity which was probably also inspired by Patriotism, cf. the Dutch translation of Thomas Gordon's *The trial of William Whiston (. . .) for defaming the Holy Trinity; before the Lord Chief Justice Reason*, included in: *A cordial for low spirits* (1751); D.tr. *Rechtsgeding tegen den godgeleerden W. Whiston* (1786); see VL 1787-i, 191–192.

<sup>234</sup> Van der Kemp claimed to be working on a treatise proving that Christ was a true man, and sent Unitarian confessions to Van der Marck and Campstede at Lingen. He also claimed to have seen a manuscript copy of Servet's *Christianismi restitutio*, belonging to a German called Stapfer. See ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by F.A. van der Kemp, dd. 16–7–1775.

<sup>235</sup> Onnes, 'De vermaner François Adriaan van der Kemp'.

He died two decades later, all but forgotten by his compatriots. Another possible candidate for Dr. Schasz is, however, Gerrit Paape, who was also obliged to leave the Republic for France after the Prussian intervention of 1787.<sup>236</sup> Schasz wrote libertine plays and stories replete with erotic sensualism and anticlericalism. In the *Journey through Ape Land* (1788), for example, Schasz's opinion regarding ministers is made abundantly clear when a simple villager is asked to verify his story about the debauched hero being carried away by seven fire-breathing dragons. 'The Reverend says so', says the villager, 'He'll preach about it this evening.' 'O!' replies the inquirer, 'Then it must be true.'<sup>237</sup> The sequel to the *Journey through Ape Land* was appropriately called *The land of arbitrary rule, or the defenders of Abimelech* (1789). The champion of Abimelech (the son of Gideon in Judges 9, who murdered his brothers to become king) is a village minister who holds protracted sermons in praise of despotism. After all kinds of intrigues the hero is obliged to take the place of the minister, but wonders whether the public will find his sermon acceptable. He is told that congregations are invariably happy with any sermon as long as they are happy with the minister. It is simply a question of donning the appropriate disguise and using the correct facial expressions. Accordingly, the hero is able heartily to condemn Abimelech and all he stands for in a sermon on the same biblical verse used by his predecessor.<sup>238</sup> Schasz clearly regarded orthodox clericalism as an immediate support for despotic political rule, and orthodoxy as naturally related to the use of physical force. The hero reports that he is used to getting his way, and that one of the methods he still sometimes employs was taught to him in his youth by his catechizer, who, after a ridiculous theological discussion on the question of whether Adam and Eve were made of glass, whacked his pupil on the head with the Bible.<sup>239</sup> Parallels between (Orangist)

<sup>236</sup> See the introduction by P.J. Buijsters to J.A. Schasz, *Reize door het apenland*, Zutphen, s.a.

<sup>237</sup> Schasz, *Reize door het apenland*, 63.

<sup>238</sup> J.A. Schasz, *Het land der willekeurigen, of de verdedigers van Abimelech* (1789), 135–153. Judges 9 was apparently popular among Patriots. Kuypers, the Patriot theology professor at Groningen, had discussed it with his students in 1787; Huisman, *Geloof in beweging*, 151.

<sup>239</sup> *Het land der willekeurigen*, 25–28. Similar views can be found in Paape's *Grondwettige herstelling van het geluk der Nederlandsche maatschappij* [*Constitutional restoration of the happiness of Dutch society*] (1787), 186–198, 216–227, 390–401; and in his many other writings.

political despotism and (Calvinist) ecclesiastical tyranny were popular with many Patriots, especially dissenters.<sup>240</sup>

For some, the political cause was inextricably yoked to the religious cause. A telling comment was made by baron Joan van der Capellen tot den Pol (1741–1784), one of the Patriot leaders. After Van der Marck had been offered a professorship at Deventer in 1783, he travelled to the town to make his acquaintance with people of importance there. At one point, a circle to which he had been invited discussed theological issues. Van der Capellen explained that this did not please him. ‘The less such issues are spoken of the better,’ he wrote to a friend. ‘Make it clear to Van der Marck that the Citizenry would never have wished him to be called if they had had the slightest doubts concerning his orthodoxy and had looked on him in any other way than as a *political* martyr. *Religious* liberty is an issue he must never touch upon in word or writing. Let him limit himself to civil matters.’ As much as I value the cause, he wrote to another friend, it is half a century too early to introduce religious liberty in the Netherlands. ‘In our country it is dangerous to pursue both Ecclesiastical and Civil Liberty.’ The first must follow from the second.<sup>241</sup> Such prudent reasoning failed to convince the Stadtholder’s party. As an advisor to the prince observed in 1782, the Patriots ‘have since long looked towards a change in the political, and many [also] in the religious administration’.<sup>242</sup> To illustrate the explosive combination of radical religion and radical politics that surfaced at the end of the century, the following will focus on two influential Patriot writers, Bernard Bosch and Gerrit Bacot.

A short-lived moral weekly, *The Post from the New Jerusalem, with messages concerning the Christian religion; to promote Christian freedom and forbearance* (1786), intimates in its title the close bond between religious freedom and democratic republicanism.<sup>243</sup> The title contains a direct reference to what was arguably the most influential Patriotic journal of the time, the *The Post from the Nether-Rhine*,<sup>244</sup> which appeared

<sup>240</sup> E.g. the popular tract on liberty: [Johannes Allart], *De Vryheid* (1783), 24–27; Johannes Allart (1754–1816) was one of the main publishers at Amsterdam.

<sup>241</sup> Quoted in Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck*, 137–138. Note that in the 1780s the revolutionary town council of Utrecht required its members to be Reformed.

<sup>242</sup> Quoted in Schutte, ‘Beschermer van Gods kerk’, 158.

<sup>243</sup> [B. Bosch], *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem, met boodschappen, betreklyk den kristelyken godsdienst; ter bevordering van der kristenen vryheid en verdraagzaamheid* (s.a.).

<sup>244</sup> *De post van den Neder-Rhyn* (1781–1787).

at Utrecht between 1781 and 1787 and was edited by the outspoken Patriotic pamphleteer, Pieter 't Hoen. *The Post from the New Jerusalem* (also published at Utrecht) has been attributed to a Reformed minister, Bernard Bosch (1746–1803), poet, pamphleteer, revolutionary, and freemason, and one of the first collaborators in the Society for the Good of the Public.<sup>245</sup> Bosch's career was characteristic of many Patriots. He first revealed himself as a fervent supporter of the Patriot movement in 1785 in a poem on self-interest, but his political activities—notoriously performed in the pulpit—ended abruptly with the Prussian invasion. He was honourably discharged from the ministry at his own request. He then led a wandering existence, co-authoring periodicals, writing reviews, and publishing articles.<sup>246</sup> In 1795, like many other ex-revolutionaries, he entered into the service of the new regime; eventually he died in poverty.

With an allusion to his own first name, Bosch, who elsewhere called himself the 'Correspondent of the Apostolic Church', prefixed a saying by Bernard of Clairvaux to his periodical: 'Who will provide for me, that before my death I may yet see God's church as she was during her first days?'<sup>247</sup> The political overtones of *The Post from the New Jerusalem* are evident from the rhetoric used in the introductory first instalment. Bosch conflated the new political vocabulary related to Patriotism, which made much use of terms like 'freedom', 'fatherland' and 'aristocracy', with terms derived from the toleration debate. The spectator, written throughout in an erratic, wildly punctuated and bombastic style (this so-called 'Herveyan' style, named after the Calvinist evangelical James Hervey, was meant to convey emotionality and aesthetic enjoyment) was addressed exclusively to 'Christian-Patriots'. Its aim was to foster 'Christian Liberty', and generally inculcate the virtue of forbearance in the minds of its readers. Above all, it intended to subvert the power of 'Church-Aristocrats', so that 'Spiritual Factionness will be dispelled' and God served freely according to the Gospel. Bosch, who was accused soon enough of being party to the 'so-called Philosophical Tolerants',<sup>248</sup> strongly opposed doctrinal systems, based on human authority. Reliance on Scripture alone was in his view the sole antidote against the

<sup>245</sup> Van den Eerenbeemt, 'Bernardus Bosch'; on the Society, see section 7.2.

<sup>246</sup> *De Godsdienstvriend* 1789–1793.

<sup>247</sup> *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem*, 37 and the reverse of the title page.

<sup>248</sup> Cf. a reader's letter dated July 1786; *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem*, 29.

shameful and widespread sectarianism caused by man-made articles of faith. He did realize that he had begun his struggle under an ecclesiastical regime characterized by force and bent on restricting freedom of thought and publication. This, he observed, was precisely what made his efforts worthwhile, since his principal aim was to free his clerical colleagues from the fetters that still shackled their consciences. Besides, the time was ripe for such a periodical. 'A Spirit of enlightenment has descended over the larger part of the Nation: everyone senses freedom to be his destiny.' There had been much progress recently in respect of civil liberties, and in spite of domineering aristocrats. Political leaders were now being clothed in the majesty of the people and selflessly attempting to bring about a 'Constitutional restoration' (*Grondwettige herstelling*; a reference to one of the more significant political blueprints of the time). Because religious freedom was inextricably intertwined with civil freedom, and because many contemporary ministers evidently favoured the new political cause, the time was ripe to begin the definitive struggle for the restoration of religious freedom according to the constitution of the Gospel.<sup>249</sup>

Bosch, who had invested heavily in his optimistic enterprise, intellectually and perhaps financially as well, was dreadfully mistaken. There was little interest in his spectator. He decided after 30 instalments that the public must be more concerned with debating the pros and cons of civil freedom. If the Dutch preferred to remain unenlightened, Bosch concluded with resignation, so be it.<sup>250</sup> *The Post from the New Jerusalem*, the only Dutch periodical devoted exclusively to the cause of religious liberty, thus came to a dismal end. It is not that the reasoning underlying Bosch's periodical was not cogent enough. In the second instalment, he spoke of the recent 'awakening' of a new political consciousness, brought about through God's providence by great leaders like the immortal Van der Capellen. However, with the exception of a few enlightened Christians, a deep slumber still characterized the religious sensibilities of most people. Many simple Christians were still perfectly content with the prejudiced beliefs they had been taught by the official teachers of the church. What was needed was a means by which the people could

<sup>249</sup> [Bosch], *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem*, 3–8. On the term 'aristocracy' in this period, see Klein, *Patriots Republikanisme*, 228–243.

<sup>250</sup> [Bosch], *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem*, 233–239.

be roused, so that they might think for themselves, make their own inquiries and test dogmatic systems, barbarous confessions and obscure doctrines against the Bible itself. Only then could they be regarded as 'free citizens of the New Jerusalem which is eternally free'. Bosch was clearly convinced that his clerical colleagues in particular felt a strong desire to follow their own consciences rather than the official formularies, and that they yearned for a Christendom that was of one heart and of one soul. As a true spectatorial strategist, he produced several (possibly fictitious) letters to show that there was support for his campaign.<sup>251</sup> It was Bosch's intention to prove to the 'church Aristocrats' that true Christian freedom and fraternal charity were feasible. He explicitly put 'domineering church Aristocrats' on a par with the worst of absolutist princes, and observed that it was not surprising that the illiberal *Canones* of Dort had been supported for so long by a despotic Dutch magistracy. The simple piety and mutual charity of the early Christians was all but lacking in the public church. To be sure, the 'Spiritual Lords' strongly emphasized civil peace. But they did so only because they were anxious that in times of strife people might not only become aware of their civil liberty, but also begin to demand freedom in the church. It was no small wonder, then, that the 'church Aristocrats' offered the greatest resistance to the spread of civil liberty. They preached their intolerant civil peace and brought their considerable influence to bear on magistrates and the ignorant populace alike.<sup>252</sup>

Liberty, defined Bosch, after one of his readers had doubted the inseparability of religious and political freedom, is the complete enjoyment of the essential privileges granted by the God of Freedom. These privileges are none other than civil and religious liberty; and the former is a necessary consequence of the latter. As long as we are not fully convinced of the need for religious freedom, we will not be able to properly appreciate civil liberty, and we will continue to act like aristocrats. This is precisely the reason why the Patriotic cause has been so slow to obtain tangible results. The political and spiritual aristocrats have lent each other support, the magistrates<sup>253</sup>

<sup>251</sup> Cf. a letter by 'J. Betlehem Jansz' which contains an ardent plea for 'total freedom of thought, speech and publication', condemns fanatic ecclesiastical leaders and suggests that the *Canones* of Dort be abolished (65-69).

<sup>252</sup> [Bosch], *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem*, 9-16, 18, 26-27, 34.

<sup>253</sup> Including, of course, the Stadtholder, 'the so-called advocate of the dominant

because they have no sense of the divine gift of freedom, the clergy because they are afraid of losing their worldly benefits. Bosch believed that diversity of opinion had a beneficial influence on morality, and that errors could do no harm anyway.<sup>254</sup> In a number of instalments, he refuted the orthodox use of formularies by advancing several theses on Christian liberty.<sup>255</sup> Thesis (1) stated that Christians need a doctrinal system to maintain discipline. However, a ‘Society of Christians’ accepting Jesus Christ as the spiritual head will recognize only the Gospel as a necessary doctrinal system. They will not subject themselves to a particular faction of clerics upholding rules laid down at a time of gross ignorance. Thesis (2) claimed that the prejudices of Christians must be removed, particularly in matters relating to ordinances and traditions which are maintained only out of ignorance and respect for ancient things. In Thesis (3), Bosch contended that ‘the church Aristocracy or rather Hierarchy must be brought down.’ The people (the church members) must be able to vote freely, so that the church council can be said truly to represent them. Thesis (4), finally, insisted that the spread of Christian liberty and toleration required the publication of a new, unprejudiced exposition of scriptural doctrine. The third thesis was the most revolutionary one, in that it suggested that the political system of direct representation, which the Patriots were seeking to initiate politically, ought to be introduced also in the Reformed Church. Bosch devoted many pages to the issue.

There must have been at least some interest in Bosch’s periodical. Why, then, did *The Post from the New Jerusalem* fail so miserably? A piece in *The Post from the Nether-Rhine* provides a clue.<sup>256</sup> The author, a certain ‘Hollandus’, who claimed to be neither a clergyman nor a hothead, noted that Bosch’s periodical had caused quite a stir and should be taken seriously. Interestingly, Hollandus suggested that Bosch had taken his cue from a certain Masius,<sup>257</sup> a correspondent

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religion’, that ‘murderer of Civilians’ and ‘damned and bloody tyrant’, who like Maurice before him misused religion for the sake of politics (109).

<sup>254</sup> [Bosch], *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem*, 34–35, 97–104.

<sup>255</sup> [Bosch], *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem*, 45–47, 53–55, 81–85, 169–184; Bosch was responding to the views of P.H. van Lis; see section 7.5.

<sup>256</sup> *De post van den Neder-Rhijn*, IX (1787), no. 455, 1227–1229 (dd. June 1786).

<sup>257</sup> Presumably this was Johann Nikolaus Masius or Meese (no dates), an obscure figure who held minor positions as tutor and secretary at Leipzig and after 1792 at St. Petersburg. His books include a *Sendschreiben der vereinigten Religionslehrer an die*

for the unified Apostolic (Protestant-Catholic) Church that had recently been conceived in Germany. Bosch's noisy carping at formularies and liturgies, he continued, reflected an issue that by now had been satiated *ad nauseam* by Dutch dissenters; the only reason why *The Post from the New Jerusalem* raised the issue again was to support the dubious cause of those who wanted to obtain civil advantages and gain a share in political power. The periodical was merely fishing in troubled waters. By combining a strictly religious issue with the campaign for political reform, it abused the real effort of the Patriot movement. Moreover, *The Post from the New Jerusalem* was grist to the mill of Hofstede and his henchmen. Had they not been discrediting Patriotism as a camouflaged attack on the established religion and an attempt to revive Arminius within the public church? Most importantly, the periodical threatened the fragile unity of the Patriot movement itself. Most 'of our sincerest and most enlightened lovers of the Fatherland' favour the established faith, alleged Hollandus, and they might easily defect to the Orangists, the self-appointed defenders of orthodoxy, if Patriotism came to be associated with religious radicalism. In a reply to the letter, *The Post from the New Jerusalem* immediately executed a volte-face. Worried about the lack of sales, and recognizing that principles rarely beat commerce, the editor observed that he, too, abhorred those who sought to bring down the public church by trying to bring about a fusion of religions.

The arguments used by Hollandus and the periodical's editor were as specious as they were strategic. Clearly, the number of those loyal to the public church who supported Patriot reform, and who were the potential buyers of Patriot periodicals, was considered significant enough to justify the abandonment of a principle (a later observer claimed that two-thirds of the Reformed clergy supported the Patriot cause).<sup>258</sup> Bosch produced a letter contributed by one of his allies<sup>259</sup> who observed that if the Patriots fell foul of *The Post from the New Jerusalem* (which he expected that they would), this would not be because they disagreed with the periodical's efforts, but because they believed them to be untimely.<sup>260</sup> This was hitting the nail on its head;

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*Christenheit, betreffend der Wiedervereinigung derselben* (1785). Masius was also connected with anti-Papist freemasonry.

<sup>258</sup> VB 1796-i, 207. By contrast, Scharp contended that seven-eighths of the Patriots were dissenters; Barger, *Scharp*, 89.

<sup>259</sup> A certain 'J. . . . r' from Rotterdam, in a letter dated 30-6-1786.

<sup>260</sup> [Bosch], *De post van het nieuw Jeruzalem*, 50-51.



the editors of *The Post from the Nether-Rhine* probably agreed, but could not say so openly for fear of losing support.

One of the most radical tracts which, like Bernard Bosch's *Post from the New Jerusalem*, combined the gist of the toleration debate with democratic republicanism as it surfaced in the 1780s, was a Dutch text published in France in 1791. It was called *Liberty and universality in the organization of truly Christian church societies; or the non-obligatory character of ecclesiastical doctrine; and the illegitimacy of civil persecution, oppression, or favouritism on the basis solely of religious opinion; applied in particular to the Netherlands, in two sermons*.<sup>261</sup> The writer was Gerrit Jacob George Bacot (1742–1822),<sup>262</sup> who described himself on the title page as doctor in philosophy, member of the Haarlem Society of Sciences, and minister of the 'universal Christian Protestant church at Dunkirk.' Bacot had studied philosophy and theology at Groningen. Under Van der Marck's supervision, he defended a *Dissertatio iuris ecclesiastici universalis de propaganda fide* (1769).<sup>263</sup> Arguing from general principles of moral philosophy, the young Bacot claimed that freedom of religious opinion is indefeasible and that Christianity cannot be spread by force. Throughout his career he would show a strong interest in natural law as a bulwark against political and ecclesiastical despotism. Having completed his studies, Bacot fulfilled his duties as a minister for 18 years at a small town in the Province of Groningen. Little is known about him during these years, other than that his wife filed for a divorce because he failed to consummate his marriage. During the 1780s, he beleaguered a Leiden poetry society with awkward didactic verse on man's moral duty, God's wisdom and the limits of human knowledge. The latter topic once again provided him with the opportunity of denouncing the church's fallible authority and of advocating Christian charity as the best rem-

<sup>261</sup> G.J.G. Bacot, *Het vrije en algemeene in de inrichting van recht Christelijke kerk-maatschappijen; of het onverbindende van alle kerkelijke geloofsregels; en het onwettige van alle burgerlijke vervolging, verdrukking, of bevoorrechtting, alleen wegens gevoelens van godsdienst; bijzonder op de Nederlanden toegepast, in twee leerredenen* (1791). The book's motto is characteristically provocative. It is a passage from article 32 of the Belgic Confession: 'We therefore reject all human contrivances and all laws that might be introduced in the service of God, binding and coercing consciences (. . .).'

<sup>262</sup> See Lindeboom, 'Een Patriots predikant'.

<sup>263</sup> Lindeboom, 'Een Patriots predikant', 88–91. Cf. ms Leiden BPL 1160, a letter by Van der Marck (dd. Nijmegen, 11–8–1773) in connection with a vacancy at the Gymnasium at Lingem, in which he calls Bacot at least as capable as Campstede (for whom he has much praise, and who got the job).

edy against fanaticism.<sup>264</sup> In a rhymed *Essay on sociability*, published anonymously in 1787 by 'a friend of men and civilians', Bacot discussed the consequences of superstition and sectarian hatred among Christians, and railed against 'ecclesiastical arrogance' as the cause of dissension.<sup>265</sup>

During the 1780s, Bacot showed himself to be an ardent supporter of the Patriot cause. He defended civilian armament as a means to protect civil rights, lent a hand to the organization of various armed volunteer corps, and was recognized as a political activist on the national level. Then, in September 1788, a year after the Prussian army had restored the Orangist regime to power, the Groningen authorities issued a warrant of arrest for Bacot. He was accused of having misemployed his pulpit to advocate the Patriot cause, causing social disorder by his role in the armed corps, and claiming that the local *regenten* only supported the prince of Orange because of the lucrative offices he had given them. Banned from the Province of Groningen, Bacot resigned from the ministry and left the Republic for Burgsteinfurt. In 1789, however, he accepted the ministry of the 'Universal Christian Protestant' church at Dunkirk.<sup>266</sup> Bacot returned to Groningen in 1795, where he became a representative to the National Convention. He later held a position with the Groningen judiciary, having obtained a degree in law under Van der Marck, and died in The Hague in 1822.

Bacot's *Liberty and universality* consists of two annotated sermons on Romans 15:5–6, preached in 1789 in the weeks before Christmas. The most interesting part of the book is the 62-page introduction. Here Bacot, like Bernard Bosch, explicitly combined the political ideals of the Patriots with the familiar eighteenth-century discourse on religious liberty. With a chaotic loquaciousness frowned upon by his reviewers and an acrimony revealing the disillusionment of an unsuccessful revolutionary, Bacot contended that in most countries the conscience-binding power of the church still restricts the rights and liberties that ought to form the basis for mankind's well-being.

<sup>264</sup> Lindeboom, 'Een Patriots predikant', 92–94.

<sup>265</sup> *Proeve op de gezelligheid* (1787).

<sup>266</sup> At Dunkirk, a popular place of refuge, some Dutch Patriots tried to put their views on the universal church into practice, predictably causing discontent among those who supported the political ideals but not the religious radicalism. There were similar frictions at St. Omer, another Patriot haven in northern France; Van Rijn, *Godsdienstige tweespalt*.

The only exceptions are America and France. Elsewhere, too, the days of the religious and political hierarchies appear to be numbered. Europe is witnessing a clash between civil liberty and arbitrary authority, and it is unlikely that the religious issue, so closely connected with the political, will not now capture the attention of enlightened and well-meaning Christians. Why should citizens continue to bear the harsh physical and capital punishments, as well as the milder forms of oppression (exclusion from civil benefits, offices, votes, guild rights, and so on) resulting from an illegitimately acquired and un-Christian authority over the human conscience? The present political order is unjust in that it prevents true religion and universal Christendom from being properly acknowledged. The constitutions of the Old Regime are treated with respect solely because prejudice has become habit. And the only reason why it is still possible to maintain the unrightful status quo is because of the pervasive influence of, on the one hand, the rebellious passions of the blind rabble, often incited by a devious and fanatic clergy lusting after political power, and, on the other, the ignorance, prejudice, superstition and tyranny of the civil authorities. Bacot obviously still had the disappointing aftermath of the Patriot Revolution in mind.<sup>267</sup>

If even irreligious writers like Voltaire defended natural rights and the mutual obligations among men, contended Bacot, it is all the more incumbent upon the truly convinced and enlightened followers of Christ's teachings to inspire their fellow Christians to exercise forbearance and fully respect religious liberty. Protestant jurists and theologians in Germany and England have done much to further this cause, and the Dutch, too, did their part. Apart from dissenters in general, Bacot referred to Noodt, Barbeyrac, and Van der Marck. Why, then, have the Dutch been unable to reform their state? Bacot provides a fourfold explanation, comprising an all-out attack on the institutional framework of the confessional public sphere.<sup>268</sup> Firstly, the personal interests of a privileged few have prevented changes to the constitution. The old system has been kept intact by the maintenance of a public church, exclusion from the guilds, the signatures and oaths required from civil servants and teachers, and so on. Passionately guarded prejudice has given these formal bonds and strictures additional support. The practice of blindly condemning cer-

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<sup>267</sup> Bacot, *Het vrije en algemeene*, I–IV.

<sup>268</sup> Bacot, *Het vrije en algemeene*, XIV–XXIX.

tain opinions as Remonstrant, Papist or Socinian has been one means of preserving bigotry. Heterodox books have been censored, so that freedom of inquiry is, in effect, limited to what the clergy considers orthodox. Any minister who distances himself from, for example, the polemic manner in which the Heidelberg Catechism has to be expounded every week, is bound to cause fierce opposition. Secondly, reform has been inhibited by the inability of the few enlightened and well-meaning people within the church and the government to denounce the status quo or put through tangible amendments. These persons would only be able to raise their voices if society in general were sufficiently informed on matters concerning toleration and the rights of conscience—but this kind of publicity has been systematically obstructed by the existing system.

The third reason for the lack of reform has been the popular support given in good faith to the religious settlement of the Dutch Republic. Lack of enlightenment concerning the nature of inalienable human rights and duties, prejudice resulting from habit, example, upbringing and education, and the praise lavished on Dutch toleration by individuals from even less tolerant nations, have blinded people to the possibility of religious reform. Religious toleration in the Netherlands ‘in fact refers to a certain sacrifice of our own rights to the general peace, by passively bearing the wrongs that are done to us.’ And this highly restrictive and inequitable form of toleration is generally presented by its defenders (for example, in the official prayer day letters) as the only way of preventing civil disorder, moral profligacy, and the subversion of all religion. The fourth reason for the absence of reform is the general inadequacy of Dutch writings on religious freedom. Rather than interpret Noodt’s famous address on religious liberty as a call to eliminate social abuses, most have regarded it as an elaborate commendation of the status quo. The Dutch would do well to take their cue from the London Unitarians, who on 14 April 1791 toasted to the civil and religious liberty of all the peoples of the earth.<sup>269</sup>

Which reforms, exactly, did Bacot consider indispensable for establishing equitable rule? The principle that it is contrary to the law to use authority to bind the religious conscience should be applied to both church and state, he claimed. It must first be applied to the

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<sup>269</sup> Bacot, *Het vrije en algemeene*, XXXII note. Elsewhere (114–115) Bacot defends the rights of Unitarians, in particular Joseph Priestley.

Reformed formularies, since they prevent the development of a religion based on free inquiry and rational conviction. The principle must then be applied to the privileged, public church, which is oppressive and injurious to those holding divergent beliefs. Bacot did not leave it at this. When the human conscience is fully respected, when the authorities of state and church no longer prescribe articles of faith, when religious education and communal worship is based only on the bond of love and ‘a mutually free and fitting agreement’, when parents are free to withhold children from baptism and no formularies are used in celebrating the Lord’s supper—when all this has been achieved, a free and universal Protestant church will arise. This is the irenic ideal which Bacot subsequently discussed at greater length in his sermons.<sup>270</sup>

Reviewers of Bacot’s book later remarked that there was little in it to distinguish it from a treatise on natural law, and they had a point. Bacot argued that the duty of civilians to unite in one and the same church derived as much from the Gospel as from the universal law of nature, or the law of charity. This conflation of natural law and Christendom points to the civilized ideal envisaged by revolutionaries such as Gerrit Bacot and his colleague Bernard Bosch. They looked forward to a democratic state in which free citizens, liberated from prejudice and educated to pursue truth independently, were inwardly convinced of the sufficiency of the Protestant *sola scriptura*. Following Van der Marck (and beyond him, Barbeyrac), they radicalized the natural law tradition; or, to put it another way, they couched basic assumptions of the polite public in the terminology of natural law, combining this with radical views on political liberty.

### 5.8 AFTER THE REVOLUTION: THE STATE, THE CHURCH, AND THE CHRISTIAN NATION

At first glance, it seems surprising that the main review periodicals of the time, all of which were dominated by Patriot editors, kept their distance from Bacot’s *Liberty and universality*. The review in the *Vaderlandse Bibliotheek*, a periodical edited by Patriot clergymen who

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<sup>270</sup> Bacot, *Het vrije en algemeene*, XXXIII–XLI. In the first sermon Bacot contrasts the simplicity of early Christianity with later developments in the Church; in the second he condemns the prescription of doctrine.

remained loyal to the public church, is perhaps most revealing. It was downright critical, particularly regarding Bacot's irenicist message. Radicals like Bacot exaggerated matters. They claimed that as long as people professed Jesus Christ, their religious differences did not matter. The reviewer considered it much more reasonable, given man's ineradicable imperfections, for like spirits to 'practise sociable religiosity' together, and for the various denominations to co-exist peacefully within a society that provided civil warrants for religious freedom and a state that did not attempt to determine the essentials of faith. The co-existence of various independent religious societies was preferable to a universal church in which all kinds of Christians worshipped side by side. Moreover, continued the reviewer, the issue ought not in any way to be confused with the question of whether civil privileges, offices, advantages, and honours should be reserved exclusively for members of a particular denomination. This question has only been raised very recently, the reviewer carefully observed, referring to developments in America and France. It had nothing to do with the universal church as such. In Bacot's bitter sermons, a purely civil issue concerning the dominant religion was confused with an exclusively ecclesiastical issue regarding subscription. Bacot apparently regarded the Dutch as indescribably stupid for not welcoming the enlightenment that was breaking through in other countries. But did the Dutch not have the right to determine whether these foreign developments reflected *true* enlightenment? Dutch Patriots had no reason to be happy with this tiresome book. Heterodox revolutionaries and above all clerical dropouts like Bacot simply played into the hands of those who disqualified Patriotism for using democratic ideals to subvert the established religion of the state.<sup>271</sup>

It would seem that Bacot's book did not appear at an opportune time, so soon after the restoration of the Orangist regime. Patriot leaders within the Reformed Church had to manoeuvre carefully, and did not wish to add heretical fuel to counter-revolutionary flames. It was shown in the preceding section (5.7) that some Patriots propagated an intimate connection between religious liberty and democratic politics, and that leading commentators did not recommend putting such views forward in public. Which alternative views on the relationship between religion and politics were extant in the final

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<sup>271</sup> *VB* 1792-i, 49–57. A less critical review in *VL* 1792-i, 186–189.

decades of the eighteenth century? This section will examine the religious views of several late eighteenth-century political groups: orthodox Orangists, liberal Orangists, orthodox Patriots, less orthodox Patriots, and radical Patriots. We shall end the section with some comments on the 1796 proposal of several Arminian Patriots to unify the Dutch churches.

The orthodox Orangist Jan Scharp, for one, observed that he knew of no Patriot leader who personally believed ‘the truth of *everything* taught in the public churches of these Lands *according to the stipulations of the Dort Fathers*’.<sup>272</sup> Among Calvinist conservatives, the idea that the Pelagian error was the main cause of the revolutionary catastrophe had become a commonplace. By endowing man with the will to do, believe and say as he pleased, and by portraying all civil and ecclesiastical authority as barbaric vestiges of arbitrary despotism, heterodox Patriots subverted the civil order.<sup>273</sup> According to the political arithmetic of some, Reformed doctrine was to Orangism as Arminianism was to States-oriented ideology.<sup>274</sup> If the citizens of the United Provinces are equal, claimed a Patriot journalist, so are the citizens of Jerusalem, regardless of whether they follow Luther, Calvin, or anybody else.<sup>275</sup> Conversely, the association between orthodox clericalism and the Stadtholderate served as useful propaganda to win over those who had no particular affection for the Reformed Church and even less for the Stadtholder. Gerrit Paape’s *The armed civic corps and the anti-Patriotic clergymen* (1786) is a fine example.<sup>276</sup>

Orthodox Orangists continued to buttress the confessional public sphere and its assumptions concerning submission to the established

<sup>272</sup> Quoted in Barger, *Scharp*, 88–89.

<sup>273</sup> Scharp, *Godgeleerd-historische verhandeling*, 126–128, referring to Priestley, Paine, Bahrdt and Basedow as the sources of such ideas; another example in Schutte, ‘Beschermer van Gods kerk’, 157. In a 1782 sermon the Arminian Patriot Boudewijn van Rees had indeed argued that there was a necessary connection between civil and theological ‘Pelagianism’; Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 196–197. Cf. also Paulus Bosveld (1731–1809), a Patriot Reformed preacher who was delegated to the National Convention in 1796, where he supported disestablishment of the church; De Visser, *Kerk en staat*, III, 19. In a controversy, Bosveld was given moral support by a colleague, Arnoldus Benthem (1744–1813), who subverted predestinarian doctrine in his *Aanmerkingen over’s menschen vermogen en onvermogen in den godsdienst* [*Comments on man’s religious capacities and incapacities*] [c. 1775]; see *VL* 1792-i, 533–538.

<sup>274</sup> The substance of [Anon.], *O tempora! O mores! of eenige hedendaagsche schadelijke grondbeginzelen ten opzichte van leef- en leerbeleid* [*O tempora! O mores! or several contemporary harmful principles regarding policies of conduct and doctrine*] (1777).

<sup>275</sup> Quoted in Hofstede, *Apologie tegen de lasterende nieuwspapieren*, 234.

<sup>276</sup> Cf. G. Paape, *De gewapende burgercorpsen en de antipatriottische geestlyken* (1786).

civil order. As we saw,<sup>277</sup> emphasis was now put less on the exclusivity of confessional doctrine and more on its legal and constitutional status. In 1775 an orthodox divine used the following argument.

The constitution of the land is such that the Reformed Faith must remain dominant everywhere. It is not possible to introduce changes into our Faith and Formularies of Unity, for otherwise things would happen that would be most detrimental, not only to our Church, but also to the Civil State and all tolerated denominations.<sup>278</sup>

This was an application to the politico-religious status quo of the republican motto, 'Boni civis esse presentem statum reipublicae tueri, eumque mutatum nolle'.<sup>279</sup> A synodal address by Johannes Claessen, *The steadiness and orderly splendour of the gospel church* (1778), was characteristically dedicated to the political commissioners who represented secular power at the provincial synods. Claessen argued that the 'foundation' mentioned in Eph. 2:20–21 consists of the Bible and the confessions together. He expressed his joy that 'the Constitution of our Country is thus established that the Public Religion and its maintenance are connected with the well-being and good order of the state'.<sup>280</sup> A decade later the same divine sermonized on *Doctrinal concord combined with reasonable liberty in secondary issues, as one of the best supports of the Christian church* (1789), on Phil. 3:15–16. Complaining about the misuse of freedom of speech and lack of respect for the clergy, Claessen again emphasized that nothing was more beneficial to the church and the state than the government joining hands with the ambassadors of the Gospel.<sup>281</sup> The same point was made by Petrus Hofstede, the erudite custodian of the Reformed Church and an oft-vilified clergyman, who was regarded in his day as the Dutch counterpart to Goeze, Lessing's adversary at Hamburg.<sup>282</sup> Hofstede was an able church leader who exerted a not inconsiderable influence at the Stadtholder's court, and who had the habit of praising the various princes of Orange in gushing superlatives and stilted metaphors,

<sup>277</sup> See section 3.1 above.

<sup>278</sup> Quoted in De Groot, 'David Kleman', 216 note.

<sup>279</sup> Cf. Klein, *Patriots Republikanisme*, 202–204.

<sup>280</sup> J. Claessen, *De vastigheid en ordelyke heerlykheid van de Euangelie kerke* (1778), 29–32.

<sup>281</sup> J. Claessen, *Eensgezindheid in de leere met eene redelyke vrijheid, in middelbaare zaaken, is onder de beste steunzels der Christelyke kerke* (1789), preface and 43.

<sup>282</sup> Hofstede corresponded with Goeze, and wrote a preface to the translation of J.M. Goeze's *Pastoralschreiben an die Gemeinen Gottes in Hamburg* (1764); D.tr. *Herderlyke brief* (1788), tr. by the orthodox Orangist Kornelis de Vogel.



making him an easy target for critics, who naturally charged him with nauseous flattery and calculated sycophancy. Hofstede had a hand in silencing a number of heterodox individuals in and about the Reformed Church, including Van der Marck. He took great efforts to defend the confessional public sphere in the 1780s, especially in his *Apology against the slanderous newspapers and other writings of these times*.<sup>283</sup>

Barueth was yet another unflinching Orangist. He wrote a well-informed *History of the Stadtholderate* (1765) in which he argued that the Dutch Republic could not exist without an 'Eminent Head', and that the Stadtholderate was necessary 'for the maintenance of our pure Religion.'<sup>284</sup> He wrote his book explicitly to support 'our Reformed Religion, established at the Synod of Dort, no less than the *stadtholderly government* (two closely connected matters).'<sup>285</sup> The *Advocate* (who may well have been Barueth himself) pursued the same theme, providing apposite lessons in political science. Most kingdoms and republics have only one dominant religion, he claimed, and in the Netherlands this is undeniably the Calvinist one. Moreover, any proper government will prevent religious diversity and foster concord as much as possible. The *Advocate* subsequently defended the elaborate system of confessional control as a means to manage an orthodox and harmonious public sphere.<sup>286</sup> These Orangist church leaders cherished oligarchic networks. An orthodox periodical pointedly published extensive biographies of magistrates who had exhibited overt loyalty to church *and* Stadtholder, such as the Grand Pensionary of Holland Pieter Steijn (1706–1772).<sup>287</sup>

The orthodox Orangist clergy maintained a complex relationship with conservatives who generally entertained less orthodox views but had few problems with the established church. Henry Goodricke, who if anything was a warm supporter of religious liberty, later wrote a book against Richard Price in which he rejected the latter's contention that religious and civil freedom were two of a kind. Goodricke

<sup>283</sup> P. Hofstede, *Apologie tegen de lasterende nieuwspapieren* (1785).

<sup>284</sup> J. Barueth, *Historie van het stadhouderschap* (1765), I–IV, 42.

<sup>285</sup> Barueth, *Zedige en bescheiden wederlegging der hedendaagsche deisten*, LXV.

<sup>286</sup> [J. Barueth?], *De advocaat der vaderlandsche kerk*, I, 25–28, 36; II, 1, 36, 62–63.

<sup>287</sup> *NB* 1774/I-ii, 105–117. Cf. also *NB* 1774/I-ii, 522–525, with a poem by N. Hinlôpen (see section 7.5) in praise of Jan Mossel van Stralen (1713–1772), secretary to the Delegated States of Holland.

stated that if religious freedom is indefeasible, civil liberty is not.<sup>288</sup> There was nothing unusual about conservative political thinkers entertaining drastic ideas on toleration. In this sense, Goodricke differed from his tutor Van der Marck, who was a religious radical with progressive political ideas, and perhaps more resembled his good friend Jan Jacob Schultens.<sup>289</sup> Orangist conservatives tended to model their blueprints of the ideal government after the proverbial enlightened German prince who benignly sustained, and resolutely controlled, the state church. Laurens Pieter van de Spiegel (1736–1800), the last Grand Pensionary of Holland, who died in exile at Lingen, pleaded for religious liberty in Pufendorffian vein. A person must be free to believe what he wishes to believe as long as he does not infringe upon the freedom of others. A well-ordered civil state, however, requires for its safety and well-being a single, publicly established religion, chosen by the government as most suitable for leading the people to happiness and virtue. Van de Spiegel himself was an able theologian who held moderately orthodox religious views.<sup>290</sup> Conservatives often made good use of the many German writings that denounced ‘popular enlightenment’ (*Volksaufklärung*) for causing political anarchy. Christian A.L. Kirchhoff (1764–1795), an itinerant German candidate for the ministry who wrote on theology and politics for lack of a job, posed the typical question, *Worauf muss ein Reich gegründet seyn, wenn innere Unruhen und Rebellionen vermieden werden sollen?* (1791).<sup>291</sup> The Patriots, incidentally, had a rather bad press in Germany, where German commentators, horrified by the boisterous radicalism of a nation that already enjoyed so much freedom in spite of being so evidently backward in other respects, generally mirrored the critical, Orangist point of view.<sup>292</sup>

<sup>288</sup> H. Goodricke, *Observations on Dr. Price's theory and principles of civil liberty and government* (1776); *D.tr. Aenmerkingen op Dr. Price's leer en grondbeginselen van burgerlyke vryheit en regeering* (1777).

<sup>289</sup> Other conservatives will be discussed in section 7.5.

<sup>290</sup> [L.P. van de Spiegel] *Historie der satisfactie (. . .)* [*History of the treaty (. . .)*] (1777); extensive critical review in *Algemeene Bibliotheek* II (1778), 26–54, 316–334. A similar plea for a ‘dominant’ church and *de facto* religious liberty of all dissenters, see *Hollands rijkdom* (1780–1783), III, 356, by the conservative Orangist Elie Luzac. On Van de Spiegel's religious views, see Boogman, *Raadpensionaris L.P. van de Spiegel*, 6.

<sup>291</sup> C.A.L. Kirchhoff, *Beknopt antwoord op de nuttige vraag, Waarop moet een ryk of staat gegrond zyn, wanneer inwendige beroertens en rebelleering zullen vermyd worden?* (1792); a highly critical review in *VL* 1793-i, 555–557.

<sup>292</sup> Popkin, ‘The German press’. Cf. J.G. Zimmermann in 1789: ‘(. . .) die Aufklärer des Glaubens und der Sitten trieben alles bis zur zügellosesten Frechheit. Aufklärung

Some noteworthy individuals belie the seemingly intimate link between Calvinist orthodoxy and quasi-monarchical Orangism. Gerard Kuypers, the one time ‘enthusiast’ from Nijkerk who collaborated in deposing Van der Marck, turned into an orthodox Patriot, albeit a moderate one. In a sermon held in 1783, he addressed the States of Groningen as the ‘Priests of our Freedom’, advocated full religious liberty for dissenters (including Catholics), and at the same time defended the established church.<sup>293</sup> Also of undisputable orthodoxy was Brunsveld de Blau, an orthodox Calvinist who sought purity in politics (in an ‘original’ republican constitution) as well as in faith (in the original confessions), admonishing ‘true Patriots’ to make sure that they maintained the formularies of concord.<sup>294</sup> Another noteworthy Patriot was Jacob Klinkhamer (1738–1817), an orthodox minister who had tried to revitalize the Cocceians’ all but defunct prophetic theology in the 1770s. Significantly, a Patriot not given to orthodoxy wondered why Klinkhamer did not simply join Hofstede’s aristocratic clique.<sup>295</sup>

Although the *Vaderlandsche Bibliotheek* dropped Bacot like a hot potato for opportunistic reasons, its political leanings were definitely Patriotic.<sup>296</sup> It was in favour of granting equal rights to all religious denominations, and reviewers like Van Hamelsveld favoured disestablishment of the public church. Ijsbrand van Hamelsveld (1743–1812) was an important person in the late eighteenth-century Reformed Church. Appointed as theology professor at Utrecht in 1784, his passionate support for the Patriots led to his dismissal in 1787, after which he turned, of necessity, into an incredibly productive writer and translator. He was a member of the National Convention in

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ward in Berlin, was neuerlich Patriotismus in Holland’; quoted in Kantzenbach, *Protestantisches Christentum im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*, 138.

<sup>293</sup> G. Kuypers, *Neerlands licht uit duisternis* (1783).

<sup>294</sup> Van der Meer, *Patriotten in Groningen*, 127–131.

<sup>295</sup> [Anon.] *Brief van Aletophilus* [Letter by (. . .)] (1793), 7. Also *De vorst en de godsdienst; iets voor de Hervormden in Nederland* [The prince and religion; a piece for the Reformed in the Netherlands] (s.a.), an orthodox but anti-Orangist tract, praised for this reason in *VL* 1796-i, 438–440. On the relations between the Reformed and the Patriots, see Schutte, ‘Gereformeerden en de Nederlandse revolutie’; Van den Berg, ‘Hervormden, dissenters en de patriottenbeweging’.

<sup>296</sup> Van Hamelsveld was the editor after 1790 and contributed many reviews to the *VB*; see De Bie, *Petrus Hofstede*, 475–476. The responsible editor between 1787 and 1790 was the Reformed minister Jacobus Kantelaar (1759–1821), a pupil of (the Patriot) Hendrik A. Schultens. Kantelaar resigned from the ministry in 1787 on account of his Patriotic views.

1796 and helped write the separation of church and state into the new constitution. Van Hamelsveld can perhaps best be compared to the 'Moderate Literati' of Scotland, men like William Robertson and Hugh Blair, with their emphasis on politeness, gentility, moderation and virtue, as well as on church discipline.<sup>297</sup> Van Hamelsveld remained loyal to the Reformed Church and was generally regarded as a moderately orthodox supporter of the existing ecclesiastical formularies.<sup>298</sup> Comparable to Van Hamelsveld in many ways was Johannes Florentius Martinet (1729–1795), descendant from a Huguenot family, natural philosopher, pedagogue, divine of the 'Vitringian' school, and a leading opinion maker in the Reformed Church.<sup>299</sup> According to a colleague, the young Martinet was consistently passed over for nomination as a minister because he was a pupil of Alberti. Martinet was the author of the *Catechism of nature* (1777–1779), an enormously popular study on physico-theology, translated into French, German, English, and Malay. Though not an outright Patriot, he wrote a *History of the world* (1780–1788) during the *Patriottentijd*, which an orthodox Orangist writer subsequently criticized as pro-Remonstrant, pro-States, and pro-French.<sup>300</sup>

The views of the *Vaderlandsche Bibliotheek* on ecclesiastical establishment became evident after the fall of the Stadtholder, when it published a review of *Religion unconnected to the state, or essay on the necessity of destroying all religious domination in a free civil society* (1795). The anonymous author was Cornelis Rogge (1761–1806), a Remonstrant preacher with a pronounced interest in social issues.<sup>301</sup> As far as Rogge was concerned, religion under the Republic had always been a mantle for (Orangist) politics. He associated superstition with political ambition, regarded the dominion of priests as inseparable from worldly

<sup>297</sup> For the Moderates, see Sher, *Church and university in the Scottish Enlightenment*. As a Patriot Van Hamelsveld, of course, supported the American Revolution, in contrast to Robertson. One could also compare him to his Anglican contemporary William Paley (1743–1805), who as an established divine defended both a trained and learned clergy and complete toleration of all dissenters on the grounds of utility.

<sup>298</sup> Cf. *VL* 1794-i, 111–112.

<sup>299</sup> Paasman, *J.F. Martinet*.

<sup>300</sup> C. Brem [as Frederik Justus van Oldenburg], *Vaderlandsche brieven* [National letters] [1793]; *VL* 1793-i, 639. Van Moolenbroek, 'Ds. J.F. Martinet en zijn vaderlandse geschiedenis', argues that 'F.J. van Oldenburg' was the evangelical Cornelis Brem (on him, see section 7.5).

<sup>301</sup> *De godsdienst afgezonderd van den staat, of proeve over de noodzaaklijkheid der vermetiging van alle heerschappij van den godsdienst in eene vrije burgermaatschappij* (1795). Lok, 'Over vrijheid, gelijkheid', 63–66; and Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 63–67.

tyranny, and called Prince Maurice the founder of Dutch slavery.<sup>302</sup> Rogge firmly advocated the separation of church and state. At the same time, he fervently defended the ‘true religion’, which he defined as belief in a Supreme Being, providence, and future rewards and punishments. Religion, he said, is necessary to foster ‘enlightenment and civilization’, and to promote virtue and eradicate vice. Thus, even if they are formally disconnected, religion and the state must live in symbiosis. It is indisputable that a religious person is necessarily also a good citizen. However, to be religious in any full and proper sense, a citizen must be free. Consequently, to ensure the happiness of citizens, the well-being of society, and the stability of the state, the National Convention must establish that religious freedom is the legal right of each and every citizen. In short, to profit from religion, the state must leave religion be. The review periodicals enthused over the book. This is what Christ (and Hoadly) had meant when he said that his Kingdom was not of this world! The publication of such a book was a tribute to the progress of enlightenment and a purer and more philosophical understanding of religion and politics.<sup>303</sup> Rogge’s colleague, Boudewijn van Rees (1753–1825), likewise argued in an essay that the Reformed Church should henceforth support itself financially, and that ‘inward, practical Religion’ could only be produced by truth and virtue, both of which required legal freedom.<sup>304</sup>

These writings by Rogge and Van Rees exemplify eighteenth-century transitions in public religion. The confessional public sphere, preserved until now by the outward symbols and practices of state-sanctioned confessionalism, had been all but replaced by a public sphere based on equal rights and universal law. Not everyone believed it necessary to separate the church from the state,<sup>305</sup> but all sup-

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<sup>302</sup> Maurice’s reputation suffered much at the National Convention; De Visser, *Kerk en staat*, III, 17.

<sup>303</sup> *VB* 1795-i, 344–349; *VL* 1795-i, 239–240. By contrast, the *VB* was not impressed by an anonymous response to Rogge: *De godsdienst verëenigd met den staat* [*Religion united with the state*] (1796); *VB* 1796-i, 441–445. *VL* 1795-ii, 81–86 and *VB* 1795-ii, 252–256 both published essays advocating the separation of church and state.

<sup>304</sup> Lok, ‘Over vrijheid, gelijkheid’, 66–69.

<sup>305</sup> The issue was much discussed between 1795 and 1800. For example, in 1797 Teyler’s Theological Society held an essay competition on the extent of the state’s influence in religious affairs, won by Van Rees; see Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 67–73. The novelist and Patriot Rhijnvis Feith, who received a silver medal, argued

porters of the new regime were in favour of equal rights for all denominations. More importantly, practically all writers believed that to function properly, the system of equal rights had to be borne by citizens convinced inwardly (i.e. sincerely, by their own volition and in all freedom) of certain basic moral and religious notions. Such independent convictions were a sign of true civilization. And if civilized citizens were necessarily free, their freedom guaranteed by law, they were also expected to make responsible use of their freedom. They were expected, that is, to appropriate inwardly the moral and religious truths of Christian civilization. For writers like Bosch, Bacot, Rogge and Rees, such truths were few, clear and simple, so that the step from civic virtue to ecclesiastical concord was but a small one. The same belief was later expressed by a member of the National Convention, who expected that political equality (all citizens have the same rights) would in due course be mirrored by religious unanimity (all citizens will be Christians).<sup>306</sup> Others turned full circle and insisted that freedom, equality and brotherhood could be preserved only if the universal church were intimately connected to the state in the new constitution.<sup>307</sup>

How did atheists relate to this new religious public of free and civilized men and women? Did freedom apply to them as well? The issue remained problematic. The *Publication of the rights of man and the citizen*, which appeared immediately after the overthrow of the Orangist regime in January 1795, included an article stating that every human being had the right to serve *or not to serve* God with impunity, and in the manner of his own choosing.<sup>308</sup> The phrase 'not to serve' was contested, since it legally sanctioned atheism. In the Constitution of 1798, article 8 would state that 'the respectful recognition of an All-Governing Supreme Being strengthens the bonds of society, and is strongly commended to each Citizen.'<sup>309</sup> The representatives were committed to religious liberty as a civil right, but apparently also

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in favour of a broad national church, since the state depended on the proper Christian education of its citizens; see Ten Bruggencate, *Rhijnvis Feith*, 119–126.

<sup>306</sup> Roosendaal, 'Geloof en Revolutie', 267; the commentator was the Amsterdam merchant and Patriot Ambrosius J. Zubli (1751–1820).

<sup>307</sup> Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 277–278, on the anonymous *De geest der constitutie of het wesen der volksrijheid* [*The spirit of the constitution or the essence of popular freedom*] [1797].

<sup>308</sup> Goslinga, *De rechten van den mensch en burger*, 92–95; my italics.

<sup>309</sup> Goslinga, *De rechten van den mensch en burger*, 155. For the discussions on the relations between church and state, see De Visser, *Kerk en staat*, III, 1–78.

required some kind of formal ratification of the new public piety. Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck (1761–1825), one of the elected delegates to the first and second National Assemblies which convened between 1796 and 1798, had voiced the still prevalent view by calling out: ‘Who can in good faith believe in the possibility of a Republic consisting solely of Atheists?’<sup>310</sup> Polite citizens were not expected to be atheists, but on the other hand, atheists were not completely ostracized by law either.

The National Convention itself was solemnly opened on 1 March 1796. It discussed the separation of church and state from 19 July until 5 August 1796, when the privileged status of the Reformed Church was officially abolished.<sup>311</sup> For the radicals, the Convention was at last an opportunity to let off anticlerical steam publicly. The lawyer Jacob G.H. Hahn (1761–1822) defended the abolition of church bells, processions, bands and gowns, crosses, monk’s cowls and other outward religious trappings.<sup>312</sup> His colleague Floh, a Mennonite, spoke in no uncertain terms of the ‘so-called God’s anointed, mitred and banded hypocrites’ who had helped enchain humanity in the name of religion. Bacot qualified the Heidelberg Catechism as an ‘indecent and stupid remnant of the old Church dominion, giving rise to religious hatred and distrust.’<sup>313</sup> Some representatives quoted with approval Thomas Paine’s observations on toleration. Toleration, the latter had said, was as bad as persecution. Both usurped the rights of man, persecution by depriving man of his liberty of conscience, and toleration by arrogating to certain

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<sup>310</sup> Cited in De Visser, *Kerk en staat*, III, 20. That religion was necessary to the well-being of the state had, of course, long been a commonplace. Examples include *Algemeen magazyn* 1785-i, 30–54, with an essay on ‘The influence of the Christian religion on civil society defended against Rousseau’; [R. Feith ed.] *De Vriend van het Vaderland* [*The friend of the Fatherland*], Amsterdam 1787, nos. 31–32: ‘The influence of Christianity on the well-being of the state and the happiness of the people’; a similar essay in *VB* 1795-ii, 241–252, 289–299. The Swiss historian Isaak Iselin (1728–1782) discussed the issue in his *Philosophische und patriotische Träume eines Menschenfreundes*; D.tr. *Droomen van een menschenvriend* (1780), vol. II. *VL* 1788-ii, 115–124, 163–168, published an address on the subject by the German prelate Karl T. von Dalberg (1744–1817), held at the Academy of Sciences at Erfurt. Cf. also the translations of Necker and Wegener mentioned elsewhere.

<sup>311</sup> Representatives at the National Convention included a number of Reformed ex-ministers, among others the Reformed G.J.G. Bacot, B. Bosch, IJ. van Hamelsveld, and J. Kantelaar, and the Remonstrant J. Konijnenburg.

<sup>312</sup> Roosendaal, ‘Geloof en Revolutie’, 270.

<sup>313</sup> De Visser, *Kerk en staat*, III, 18.

authorities the power to grant that liberty.<sup>314</sup> A small contingent of radical revolutionaries was Roman Catholic. They combined ideals of Christian concord based on theist notions (and often not much else) with republicanism and natural law, were often involved in Jansenism and freemasonry, called for a single academic course in theology for all denominations, and proposed national festivities as a replacement for church services.<sup>315</sup>

Such radicalism was evident also in the spate of revolutionary pamphlets that celebrated the downfall of the old Republic and the abolition of its defective constitution. The *Republican Catechism, or the first basic rules of republican morality* typically minimized the Christian religion.<sup>316</sup> Anticlericalism raged rampant in the Dutch translation of the *Versuch über den Patriotismus* (1793), by Heinrich Christoph Albrecht (1763–1800), private teacher at Hamburg, freemason, and disciple of Thomas Paine.<sup>317</sup> The radical Patriot Jean Henri des Villates (1757–1797), sentenced to 25 years imprisonment in connection with a plot against the Stadtholder, was set free in 1795, only to publish an anticlerical book; he soon left for Burgsteinfurt, where he died.<sup>318</sup> Another author stated, with a clumsy attempt at rhetorical elegance:

No longer does an empty Priesthood, in conjunction with treachery and hellish Politics, mislead, confuse or guide wandering Humanity in the deep dark cavern of Mystical superstition; no longer do the people pursue or crush each other in the shadow-play of oracle lamps; now, supported by the great free people of France, they employ instruments in the hand of the Supreme Being, the God of Liberty, and the universal Father of Man who punishes tyranny (. . .).<sup>319</sup>

<sup>314</sup> Roosendaal, 'Geloof en Revolutie', 267. Paine's *The Age of Reason* (1794–1795), translated as *De eeuw der rede* (1798), was enormously popular in the Netherlands; Van Gestel, 'Dutch reactions to Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*'.

<sup>315</sup> For an overview, see Roosendaal, 'Geloof en Revolutie'.

<sup>316</sup> *Republikeinsche Catechismus, of eerste grondregelen van republikeinsche zedekunde* (1795). Also pertinent to the debate on religious liberty are [Anon.], *Leerrede over den overgang van de overheersching tot de vryheid* [Sermon on the transition from domination to freedom] (1795); [Anon.], *Redevoering over de vryheid, volgens de natuurlyke staatkunde* [Sermon on freedom, according to natural political theory] (1795); *Republikeinsche redevoeringen* [Republican orations] (1795).

<sup>317</sup> H.C. Albrecht, *Proeve over het patriotismus* (1794); VL 1796-i, 498–507.

<sup>318</sup> J.H. des Villates, *Brieven over wysgeerige en andere onderwerpen* [Letters on philosophical and other subjects] (1795).

<sup>319</sup> *Over de constitutie, constitutioneele magten en regeeringsvorm* [On the constitution, constitutional powers and government] (1795); quoted in VL 1795-i, 520–524.



Radical French writings appeared, such as the Comte de Volney's *Ruines, ou méditations sur les révolutions des empires* (1791), which argued that all religions, including the Christian, are the result of the deification of nature, and portrayed the union between church and state as an instrument of clerical domination.<sup>320</sup> An especially egregious book, the *Essay on one true church, or philosophical argument that there can only be one religion on earth that is compatible with man's happiness*, was denounced as an anticlerical and deistic subversion of all religion, written in the despicable vein of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Paine.<sup>321</sup>

Pleas for universal religion of nature were radical enough, but they should not mislead us. By far the greater number of people who favoured full religious emancipation were probably also quite content to remain within traditional denominations. What *had* changed was the religious public. Its focus had shifted from the outward confessionalism supported by the state to the inward moral persuasion of the individual citizen. This can be illustrated by an essay by one of the editors of the *Publication of the rights of man and the citizen*, Pieter Paulus (1754–1796). Paulus had published an enormously popular essay on the equality of men before the collapse of the Orangist regime.<sup>322</sup> He offered an extensive defence of the idea that all men are free and equal by showing its conformity to Revelation. The contents of his book say a great deal more about the reading public Paulus was trying to reach than about his own religious views. Paulus was simply trying to make principles he would otherwise have derived from natural law tolerable for those who set greater store by the Bible. Paulus was a member of the Reformed Church, but not particularly orthodox—the kind of career-Calvinist abhorred by Johannes Barueth. In 1773, as a law student at Utrecht, he had favoured full toleration of dissenters, but added prudently that he was not yet certain whether public offices ought to be open to them. Paulus soon married into a wealthy *regent* family and progressed rapidly through public service. He openly supported the Patriots dur-

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<sup>320</sup> D.tr. G.-F. de Chasseboeuf, comte de Volney, *De puinhoopen* (1796), espec. chapters XX–XXII. Significantly, a second translation avoided these controversial passages: *De ruïnen* (1796).

<sup>321</sup> [Anon.], *Proeve over ééne waare kerk*, s.l. 1796; cf. *VL* 1796-i, 578–579. See also Van Gestel, 'Dutch reactions to Thomas Paine's *Age of reason*', 292–293.

<sup>322</sup> P. Paulus, *In welken zin kunnen de menschen gezegd worden gelijk te zijn?* [*In which sense can people be said to be equal?*] (1793). See Goslinga, *De rechten van den mensch en burger*, 48–77; Van der Wall, 'Geen natie van atheïsten'.

ing the hectic eighties, which led to his dismissal, and in 1795 became one of the leaders of the Batavian Republic. He was praised as the 'second Hugo Grotius' for his essay of 1793. Paulus argued that the freedom and equality of men could be derived, not only from natural law (following Burlamaqui), but also from the Old Testament (which gives an account of the common humanity of mankind). These principles were affirmed by Jesus, the ideal man and citizen, who preached equality and universal charity. Since civil society has been established to maintain equality, Christianity must logically be the religion most conducive to its well-being. The civil rights listed by Paulus included the right to think, speak and write, to serve God as one pleased,<sup>323</sup> and to have one's eligibility for public office tested only on the basis of virtue and talent.

Inward convictions, the public expression of which should (as Paulus suggested) be formally legalized by a new code of civil rights, formed the basis of the polite religious public. This reflected a *communis opinio* of late eighteenth-century polite society. By contrast, views on the nature of political liberty could differ considerably. We have seen that some writers emphasized the immediate connection between religious freedom (the liberty to voice radical theological views) on the one hand, and political freedom (the liberty to contribute actively to responsible citizenship) on the other. Hardly an illogical connection, since the freedom to express personal convictions was widely accepted as the fundamental premise of the polite public. Moreover, the tenability of this 'integrated' politico-religious radicalism was borne out by the fact that orthodox Orangists held a similar integrated view which claimed precisely the opposite, stressing submission to religious and political authorities as a necessary prerequisite to the confessional public sphere. However, the connection between religious and political radicalism or orthodoxy was not an ineluctable one. As conservatives like Van de Spiegel show, it was perfectly possible to accept the libertarian implications of the polite public without projecting them into political theory.

The Patriot editors of the influential *Vaderlandsche Bibliotheek* may have favoured disestablishment, but at the same time they were convinced, firstly, that there was a reciprocal relation between religion and the state, and secondly, that it was worthwhile to preserve the

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<sup>323</sup> Goslinga (68) notes that Paulus had included the right *not* to serve God in his exposition of natural rights, but excluded it in his overview of civil rights.

specific character of the Reformed Church as an institution defined by its history, traditions, and doctrine. Both points are prominent in reviews published during the Batavian Republic. The *Comments on regulating the payment of Reformed ministers, and a short inquiry whether religion has nothing in common with the state* (1795) was criticized for its superficiality.<sup>324</sup> The author's contention that religion and the state have nothing in common was too extreme for the reviewer. The well-being of the state can only be advanced if it encourages and protects religion.<sup>325</sup> Similarly, church discipline and clericalism were defended in a review of an *Address arguing that Jesus is the teacher of that religious enlightenment which is now penetrating into Europe*, a speech apparently held at a gathering of 'Free Christians'.<sup>326</sup> The writer, who contended that dominant churches were mere inventions of politics, evidently had a grudge against the clergy of the erstwhile dominant church. The reviewer considered his resentment unjustifiable. Where the American clergy had supported the American Revolution,<sup>327</sup> the majority of Dutch Reformed clergymen had supported the Patriots. Yet, the Dutch clergy were now portrayed as the allies of stupidity, enthusiasm and slavery only because they believed that there could be no moral or legal objection to a group of like-minded people organizing themselves in a religious society under the leadership of a clergy. Now that the civil administration justly requires incumbents officially to acknowledge human rights by signing political formularies, ecclesiastical formularies are heavily criticized—as if the one were comparable to the other!

In 1795, Remonstrants who sympathized with the new regime began to work the public mind directly with proposals for church unity. The *Vaderlandsche Bibliotheek* applauded their ideal of a universal church in which all Christians could praise the same Lord in fellowship and brotherhood. Jesus had certainly designed that such a church be founded one day, and its establishment was no less feasible

<sup>324</sup> [Anon.], *Aanmerkingen omtrent het regelen van de betaling der gereformeerde predikanten* (1795); *VB* 1796-i, 160.

<sup>325</sup> Cf. also an essay in *VB* 1796-ii, 625–634: the state should provide for complete religious freedom, but also had to stimulate the dissemination of properly enlightened religious notions contributing to the happiness of the people.

<sup>326</sup> *Redevoering ten betooge, dat Jesus de leeraar is van die godsdienstige verlichting, welke thands in Europa doordringt* [c. 1796]; *VB* 1796-i, 204–208.

<sup>327</sup> The reviewer quotes the *Letters on the present disturbances in Great Britain and her American Provinces* (1777) by the artist Allen Ramsay (1713–1784).

than laying down a universal charter of human rights. However, as long as people are still attached to prejudice, do not inquire for themselves, and continue to depend on the clergy—in short, as long as mankind has not attained an adequate state of moral perfection, such church unity will remain utopian. The truly catholic church intended by Jesus requires a veritable Reformation, one that will not be brought about by man but orchestrated by God when the time is ripe.<sup>328</sup> Such mildly millenarian expectations, relegating the prophesied ecumenical community to providence and the future, enabled the more enlightened part of the conservative Reformed clergy both to extend a hand of friendship to idealistic dissenters and to hold on to a more familiar and traditional churchhood.

Freed at last from the control of the Reformed clergy, the Remonstrant Brotherhood in 1796 published an official statement, signed by a number of prominent Arminians (including Van Rees), which called on the various religious denominations to unite in the name of Christian charity.<sup>329</sup> The document was a recapitulation of the dissenters' contribution to the toleration debate since at least the 1730s and 1740s. Its significance follows, not from its rather predictable contents, but from the fact that it was a formal, public proposal made independently of the civil authorities—an irenical counterpart to the legalization of religious equality. Apart from the odd exception, the response to the proposal was, from the point of view of its initiators, enormously demoralizing. One of the few exceptions was Jan Jacob Serrurier (1724–1804), a former correspondent of Jan Jacob Schultens.<sup>330</sup> The greater part of the Reformed clergy wanted little to do with the proposal. Individual ministers such as the Patriot Johan Jacob le Sage ten Broek (1742–1823), seconded by the Orangist Jan Scharp, rejected the Arminian scheme as a minimalist corruption of the Christian religion, provoking in turn an angry response from the Remonstrant community.<sup>331</sup> The various

<sup>328</sup> VB 1796-i, 434–441; a review of 'Charitas'/'Phileus', *Bijdragen tot bevordering van eene algemeene Christelijke kerk* [Contributions to the advancement of a universal Christian church], Amsterdam 1795; a more positive review in the VL 1796-i, 359–363. A second series (*Nieuwe bijdragen*) appeared in 1797 and has been attributed to Jan Konijnenburg; Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 280–283.

<sup>329</sup> Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 54–55, 86–90.

<sup>330</sup> Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 271–272; MS Leiden BPL 127 AD1, letter by J.J. Serrurier, dd. 26–11–1754.

<sup>331</sup> J.J. le Sage ten Broek, *Kerkelijke redevoering over de waare christelijke verdraagzaamheid*

Reformed synods observed politely that union was out of the question as long as doctrinal differences were not resolved, and that was that.<sup>332</sup>

The lesson to be drawn from this belated spate of irenicism was, of course, that the early eighteenth-century latitudinarians had been entirely correct. As long as the state was not directly involved in pushing through church unification, ecumenical ideals were impossible to realize. And if there is one thing that nineteenth-century Dutch history makes clear, it is that the religious liberty claimed by the polite public did not conduce to unionism; nineteenth-century Dutch Protestantism was inherently separatist.<sup>333</sup> The Reformed Church of the later 1790s was still a powerful institution that could pride itself on substantial popular support, a strong organization, numerous informal relations with the state, and a skilled clergy. It was still to embark on a long and distinguished career as the chief custodian of the Protestant national ethic. The next two chapters are devoted to the development and dissemination of this ethic.

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[*Ecclesiastical address on true Christian forbearance*] (1797); Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 256–269.

<sup>332</sup> Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 289–297. Cf. the *Brief aan mijne landgenooten, die tot andere christelijke genootschappen behooren* [*Letter to my countrymen who belong to other denominations*] (1796); possibly by Brouerius Broes (1757–1799), a theology professor at Leiden; the author sympathized with the proposal for union but argued that it were better if all fellow Protestants simply joined the Reformed Church.

<sup>333</sup> See the Epilogue below.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ADVANCING FUNDAMENTALS

#### INTRODUCTION: THE SUBVERSION OF PUBLIC ORTHODOXY

In 1790 the Society for the Defence of the Christian Religion Against its Current Adversaries held a competition for the best essay demonstrating ‘which are the main reasons why all kinds of writings, disputing either the revealed religion in general or its main truths in particular, are more successful in these days than before, and often make a deep impression on the sentiments of the reader.’ Also known as the *Haagsch Genootschap*, since it was established at The Hague in 1785, the Society was the mouthpiece of anxious ministers within the public church. It sought the church’s formal approbation for the prize essays it published and although it lost its orthodox Calvinist stamp after a decade or so, it was regarded as a successful confessional society. The *Haagsch Genootschap* seems to have been in planning since the early 1770s, but the last straw for the guardians of confessional orthodoxy were the Dutch translations of Gotthilf Steinbart’s *System der reinen Philosophie* and Joseph Priestley’s *History of the corruptions of Christianity*, in 1781 and 1782 respectively.<sup>1</sup> At its first official meeting in 1787, one of the founders, Johannes Heringa (1733–1816), explained the aims of the new society. It intended to combat the soul-corrupting ‘Unbelief’, which had come to the Netherlands and Germany via Italy, France and England, by publishing essays providing apologetic arguments in defence of traditional doctrine and suggesting practical measures to prevent the spread of heterodox views.<sup>2</sup> In effect, the Society symbolized the incorporation of traditional orthodoxies into the polite public.

Hence the essay competition opened by the *Haagsch Genootschap* in 1790. In a sober and intelligent contribution, the winner, a certain

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<sup>1</sup> On Steinbart, see section 6.2 below; on Priestley, see section 6.3; an outline of the Society in Heering, *Op de bres*.

<sup>2</sup> Johannes Heringa, ‘Aanspraak’, in: *PGVCG* (1792), xxxix.

'Christiaen', discussed the reasons for the success of heterodox writings.<sup>3</sup> According to Christiaen, the influence of harmful writings had increased enormously over the past three decades, that is, since about 1760.<sup>4</sup> He mentioned two causes, the one general, the other particular. The general cause was an 'increase in unguided Reading' and a marked decline in the willingness to read traditional literature, rhymed psalms, hymn books, catechisms, and devotional writings. Christiaen considered the expansion of the reading public and the spread of knowledge as highly desirable, but only when guided by proper religious books. Literate citizens, he said, should certainly not be led by books of German provenance. He singled out the 'Revolution of Theology in Germany' as the particular cause of the widespread dissemination of heterodox books. German divines employed devious means to achieve very doubtful aims. Voltaire had spoken openly of his disdain for the Christian religion. By contrast, contemporary Germans attacked Christianity from within. They disguised their philosophical and moral writings by giving them religious titles; they wrote misleading reviews; they deceived the common people by humbly pretending to provide only straightforward education and instruction; they professed to defend orthodoxy but discussed only general truths; as clergymen who had solemnly pledged their loyalty to the confessions, they undermined traditional doctrine in the name of the purified essence of Christianity.<sup>5</sup> To put it another way, contemporary German theologians were attempting to mould the polite public from within the institutional heart of the old order.

'Christiaen' was not the only apologist who regarded the influence of German theology since about 1760 as even more disastrous for the public stature and authority of confessional orthodoxy than the

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<sup>3</sup> *PGVCG* (1791), 1–74. Interestingly, according to Bouman, *De godgeleerdheid en hare beoefenaars in Nederland*, 192, 'Christiaen' was Allard Hulshoff. This Mennonite was reputed to have become an orthodox evangelical later in life; see Van Eijnatten, *Hogere sferen*, 605.

<sup>4</sup> Christiaen's orthodox contemporaries would have agreed. Scharp, *Godgeleerd-historische verhandeling* (1793), 2, pointed towards the past 25 years, with an added impulse after 1770; the translator of [Hoffmann], *Ernstige en trouwhartige waarschouwing* (1792), put the date at 1780 or earlier; Klinkenberg in his preface to Baumgarten-Crusius, *De leer der drieënhed* (1797), IX, mentioned 1767. Willem Bilderdijk dated the onset of corruption to 1772; see Van Eijnatten, *Hogere sferen*, 604–605.

<sup>5</sup> The argument was a common one among the orthodox. Cf. Klinkenberg's preface to Baumgarten-Crusius, *De leer der drieënhed* (1797); also Hofstede in Goeze, *Herderlyke brief*, XVIII: where the deists had assaulted Christendom head-on, the Germans unobtrusively subverted it.

threat of deism. Jan Scharp wrote a well-informed *Theological-historical treatise on the opinions, the basis, the significance with respect to eternity and civil society, the progress, and the resistance of the contemporary so-called enlightenment and opposition to religion* (1793), based on a broad knowledge of contemporary German sources. He followed a Rotterdam initiative to publish apologetic sermons, receiving the considerable sum of 800 guilders for his efforts. Scharp too spurned the attempt by German divines surreptitiously to undermine the fundamentals of a faith that in many countries ranked as the ‘*dominant Doctrine* (. . .) protected by *public authority*’.<sup>6</sup> He proceeded to catalogue ‘new Arians’ and ‘contemporary Socinians’ (who were especially prevalent in England), the esoteric ‘*Illuminati*’, but above all the German *Aufklärer*, the fraudulent ‘*Christian-Deists*’ who taught a ‘new kind of Christendom without Christianity, a Gospel without misery and salvation, a faith without Revelation (. . .)’.<sup>7</sup> The later 1780s and 1790s are replete with such attempts to throw up defences against the incursion of recent heterodox writings, especially from Germany. The main concern of the orthodox was the certainty of salvation and its foundation, the Revelation of the Word of God. What they perceived as attacks on the authority of Revelation—by irresponsible writers invoking natural theology, suggesting that God accommodated himself, refuting literal inspiration, extolling morality and generally suppressing traditional doctrine—they looked upon as unequivocal threats to the certainty of salvation on which depended the spiritual well-being of their congregations. If they did not take responsibility for attending to the souls of ordinary men and women, who would?

Virtually all apologetic initiatives of the period stress the influence of German writings. What they referred to was, in effect, the Dutch reception of ‘*Die neologische Kämpfe von 1760–1780*’, to put it in Karl Aner’s words, the clerical attack on hallowed theological notions concerning evil spirits, hell, the satisfaction of Christ and supernatural grace, to name but a few.<sup>8</sup> Not all deleterious writings were

<sup>6</sup> Scharp, *Godgeleerd-historische verhandeling*, 57; the treatise was an enlarged version of a sermon on, appropriately, Ef. 4:14.

<sup>7</sup> Scharp, *Godgeleerd-historische verhandeling*, 60, 129. Cf. the treatise by the Hungarian divine Michael Szathmáry-Pap, who classified the opponents of the true religion in three classes: (1) outright atheists; (2) deists and naturalists; and (3) those who seemed to attach some value to Revelation. The latter group included modern Arians and Socinians, Pelagians, latitudinarians, and enthusiasts; *VL* 1789-i, 355–362 (review of *PGVCG* (1788)).

<sup>8</sup> Aner, *Theologie der Lessingzeit*, 234–295; see also Van der Wall, ‘*Religiekritiek en apologetiek*’.



German in origin. There were also English and French books, and, of course, writings of Dutch provenance. However, in terms of numbers as well as intellectual impact, the German were by far the more significant.<sup>9</sup> The deluge of treatises to which orthodox divines objected occasioned an irreversible shift in Dutch divinity; no theological field escaped their influence. Moreover, most publications were implicitly or explicitly intent on subverting orthodoxy, understood as a public religious practice firmly entrenched in the Old Regime. The aim of the German *Opklaarer* (as they were sometimes called in Dutch, as a literal translation of the German *Aufklärer*) and their Dutch imitators was no less to provide a religiously sound and intellectually satisfying basis for an alternative religious public. The aim of the new writers was twofold. They tried, first, to promote a moderate scepticism that left the core of religious faith untouched and, secondly, to establish an accessible theology. What they did, in result, was advance the fundamentals of faith to a status they had never before possessed in Christian society. Whatever was necessary to salvation had to be able to withstand biblical or philosophical criticism, they believed; and whatever was necessary was also capable of being understood by the common people. It would be wrong to suppose that the orthodox apologists united in the *Haagsch Genootschap* were automatically opposed to these aims. They, too, favoured openness and freedom in social practice as much as they pursued simplicity in doctrine. Even if they were notoriously reticent in accepting biblical criticism, many of them were involved in moulding polite society. Responding to the German reformers, they concentrated on a restricted number of fundamental doctrines, notably those concerning original sin and the divinity and satisfaction of Christ.<sup>10</sup>

Aner's 'neologische Kämpfe' will provide a rough framework for the following overview of the religious books that so disturbed some contemporary Dutch divines and provoked them to seek out, like their adversaries, a common, 'ecumenical' denominator of faith. The intellectual basis of the religious public sphere was fundamentally transformed in the process, as the following sections will show. The first section is concerned with the Dutch response to 'unbelief' (6.1). This response was highly ambiguous, since those apologists who con-

<sup>9</sup> Van Eijnatten, 'History, reform, and *Aufklärung*'.

<sup>10</sup> Brecht, 'Spätpietismus und Erweckungsbewegung', 8, uses the term 'theologische Reduktion.'

fronted irreligious radicalism also took the opportunity of subverting orthodox control of the public sphere. Opposition to orthodoxy in general, and to orthodox religious control in particular, is further reflected in the reception of German *Neologie* (6.2), in the rise of biblical criticism and the pursuit of modernized ecclesiastical history (6.3), and, above all, in the attack on subscription (6.4). In a final section, we shall take a closer look at some important presuppositions of the polite public, namely, the twofold emphasis on doctrinal simplicity and moral practice (6.5).

### 6.1 DUPLICITY IN COLLABORATION

This section is concerned with apologies. It attempts to explain why apologies were so enormously popular in the second half of the eighteenth century. Before we discuss these apologies, however, we shall briefly examine manifestations of irreligion in the Dutch Republic, by discussing the availability of radical writings produced by both foreign and domestic ‘unbelievers’.

Unfortunately, the history of radical libertinism in the early modern Netherlands has not yet been written. If one thing is clear, it is that in such a study the notorious *Traité des trois imposteurs* ought to figure largely.<sup>11</sup> The *Traité* is mostly an anthology of radical philosophers and freethinkers, above all Spinoza and Hobbes, but also Lucilio Vanini, François de la Mothe le Vayer, and Guillaume Lamy. The only certain thing that can be said about the treatise, in the form in which it has been handed down in manuscript and print, is that it must have been written between 1677, when Spinoza’s *Ethica* appeared, and 1700, when the German pietist Johann Wilhelm Petersen mentioned it.<sup>12</sup> The first edition was printed in the Netherlands in 1719 as *La vie et l’esprit de Mr. Benoît de Spinoza*, together with excerpts from writings by Gabriel Naudé and Pierre Charron. But the book only began to be disseminated on a larger scale after 1768, when it was published at Amsterdam (another edition appeared here in 1776) as the *Traité des trois imposteurs*, probably at the instigation

<sup>11</sup> Laursen, ‘Impostors and Liars’; S. Berti *et al.*, eds., *Heterodoxy, Spinozism, and free thought*.

<sup>12</sup> Introduction in Schröder ed., *Traktat über die drei Betrüger*, XVII; Laursen, ‘The politics of a publishing event’.

of d'Holbach. The latter's interest was not, of course, surprising, since the *Traité* offered a concise account of the materialist and atheist postulates of radical French *philosophes*, including the explicit denial of Creation, the freedom of the will and the immortality of the soul.

After his sojourn in the United Provinces, Diderot noted that 'la distribution des livres impies y est plus difficile qu'en France, et les incrédules plus rares et plus haïs'.<sup>13</sup> Is this true? When Johann Beckmann observed in the early 1760s that in the Dutch Republic the freedom to write books was not as unlimited as foreigners were wont to think, he illustrated his point by adding: 'Ich fragte in einigen Laden nach verdächtigen Büchern; man gab mir aber allemal zu verstehn, daz man solche etwa nur heimlich an gute Freunde verkäufte'.<sup>14</sup> Suspicious books, then, were extant in the United Provinces, and apparently they were traded clandestinely among native Dutchmen. While no Dutch pastors seem to have taken the trouble to pen an explicit refutation of the *Traité*, it is highly improbable that they knew nothing about it. Franz Georg Christopher Rütz (1733–1803), a Lutheran divine of German origin who sympathized with the new theology imported from his homeland,<sup>15</sup> must have obtained his own collection of unmentionables clandestinely. In 1781, he claimed to possess no less than five different manuscripts of *De tribus impostoribus*.<sup>16</sup> Rütz is characteristic of the critical divine who had to operate carefully so as not to upset his Lutheran colleagues, the Reformed clergy, and the magistracy. He promised to demonstrate to his colleagues that this 'notorious *Pamphlet*' was not an original publication but merely the fictive product of a flippant mind intent on earning money ruthlessly. Rütz never did produce his proof, but instead wrote an intellectual biography of the Comte de Passerani, Albert Radicati, thus exhibiting in public the iniquitous ideas of at least one 'most godless' deist.<sup>17</sup> In contrast to his orthodox colleagues, who consid-

<sup>13</sup> Diderot, *Voyage en Hollande*, 112.

<sup>14</sup> Kernkamp ed., *Johann Beckmann's dagboek*, 454.

<sup>15</sup> Rütz (and Barkey) gave Bahrdt a warm welcome during the latter's travels through the Netherlands; Bahrdt, *Geschichte seines Lebens*, vol. III, 292–293.

<sup>16</sup> Similarly, the *regent* and bibliophile Gerard Meerman (1722–1771) had written to his acquaintance J.J. Schultens on the possible oriental origins of *De tribus impostoribus*, of which he possessed one Latin and three French editions; see MS Leiden BPL 245-XII, letter by G. Meerman, dd. 10–1–1766.

<sup>17</sup> F.G.C. Rütz, *Kleine bijdragen tot de deïstische letterkunde* (1781); review in *NB* 1782-i, 436–440. After fleeing from Italy and England, Radicati spent the rest of his life in the Republic.

ered it unwise to put harmful thoughts into anybody's head, Rütz believed that Revelation itself was assisted if objections to it were discussed in all openness. He had no objection to Lessing putting Reimarus' deistic views before the public (although he did protest against the disrespectful tone of the *Wolfenbütteler Fragmente*).<sup>18</sup> Defenders of the polite public such as Rütz were in a quandary. They wished to stretch the limits of press freedom and bring unbelief out into the open, but they could not always do so without impunity and they certainly did not wish to undermine the credibility of Christendom itself. Rütz advised the Schoonhoven Company at Utrecht not to publish a translation of the *Fragmente* until a reputable Dutch scholar had written a refutation; in the end, the entire project was cancelled.<sup>19</sup> Only personal letters reveal that Lessing's *Fragmente* were known in the Republic and eagerly read by some.<sup>20</sup>

The Dutch were still important distributors of radical books. The international market was one thing, however, and the domestic quite another. Prudent publishing policies, government censorship, and limited commercial possibilities in a small country, prevented publication of the most depraved writings in Dutch. It took a Huguenot like Elie Luzac to publish Julien Offroy de La Mettrie's *L'Homme-machine* at Leiden in 1747 (subsequently refuted by Luzac himself in a *l'Homme plus que machine*). It took a German like Johann Salomo Semler to publish Lodewijk Meyer's *Philosophia scripturae interpres* (1776).<sup>21</sup> And it took Semler's patronage to reissue Balthasar Bekker's *The world bewitched* in 1781–1782, after it had appeared in Dutch in four volumes in 1691–1693 (with reprints in 1715 and 1736). Bekker had had a small flock of Dutch adherents early in the century,<sup>22</sup> but when he resurfaced fifty years later, he did so under the aegis of German divines.

Given the unimpressive Dutch record regarding more or less radical publications, real 'unbelievers'—which in the eighteenth century could include atheists and deists or 'naturalists', or any other wilful

<sup>18</sup> *NB* 1782-i, 439.

<sup>19</sup> *NB* 1779-i, 337–343. The *NB* published a short refutation of the passage through the Red Sea in the *Fragmente*; *NB* 1783-ii, 73–84; according to *Heinemeyer* H/F-Ha 274, the article was by Van Hamelsveld.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. a letter to Van der Marck, quoted in Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck*, 208.

<sup>21</sup> Hornig, *Johann Salomo Semler*.

<sup>22</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 80–81.

manifestation of indifferentism or libertinism—are hard to trace in the United Provinces. But given also the regular complaints of the clergy, unbelievers must have been relatively common, especially in the higher social circles.<sup>23</sup> One minister, writing privately to the Stadtholder's mother in 1749, complained that the number of deists and atheists in the Netherlands was larger than anyone suspected.<sup>24</sup> Anonymous libertines typically figure in the novels of Betje Wolff. Thus, 'R' (unbelievers were never given names) observes that in his gospel of religious relativism, every nation needs a religion as much it needs laws; if he had been born in Turkey, he would have been a Mussulman.<sup>25</sup> Isabelle de Charrière (Belle van Zuylen) is another striking example. She owned to James Boswell 'that she had no religion other than that of the adoration of one GOD.' Her confession of faith Boswell found to be 'elegant but slight', and she held the common sceptical objections against Revelation. As for Boswell, he simply concluded after such conversations that 'every man has his own Christianity.'<sup>26</sup> Although Belle was Swiss and Boswell English, freethinking was probably quite common in Dutch high society. One prominent academic who was widely suspected of being indifferent to religion in its more recognizably Christian forms was the scientist, academic and magistrate Petrus Camper (1722–1789). For opportunistic reasons the Orangist Camper had sided against Van der Marck at Groningen in 1773, and much to the surprise of the critics, Calvinist church leaders actually praised him as a defender of orthodoxy; he was nothing of the sort.<sup>27</sup>

Native humanism of the deist kind could be found in the neoplatonic aestheticism of Frans Hemsterhuis (1721–1790), the only Dutch philosopher of the second half of the eighteenth century to enjoy international renown.<sup>28</sup> In the *Lettre sur les désirs* (1770), Hemsterhuis discussed 'religion, qui résulte proprement du rapport de chaque

<sup>23</sup> E.g. *Algemeen Magazyn*, 1791-i, 57, arguing that some cynical magistrates maintained religion only to control the people; *De Godsdienstvriend*, I (1789), 15. Such complaints were already common in the early eighteenth century; see section 5.3.

<sup>24</sup> Hieronymus van Alphen, quoted in Smits, 'Zinzendorf en Maria Louise van Oranje', 57.

<sup>25</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Sara Burgerhart*, ed. Buinsters, Letter 94.

<sup>26</sup> Boswell, *Boswell in Holland*, 270, 277.

<sup>27</sup> ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by G.W. van Marle, dd. 24–3–1773. Camper was not an outright atheist either; cf. Meijer, *Race and aesthetics in the anthropology of Petrus Camper*, 7–13.

<sup>28</sup> A recent introduction is M.F. Fresco *et al.*, eds., *Frans Hemsterhuis*.

individu à l'Être Suprême,' the goal of which is the individual's 'plus grand bien'. However, since no two individuals are exactly equal, it is impossible for any two individuals to have equal relations with the Supreme Being. In consequence, there can be no single general relation ('un seul rapport général') between a group of individuals and God. If religion is a highly individual matter, churches and communal confessions must be redundant or even harmful. The ancient Greeks respected man's religious individuality, though they maintained communal ceremonies and parades to ensure a basic measure of enlightenment among the common people. Modern man is enlightened in that he possesses the certainty of eternal life. Yet modern society fails to respect his individuality. Civil authorities, worried by the decline in civil virtue, concern themselves with religion as a means to foster morality, where they have no right to do so. Fortunately, the progressive enlightenment of man has resulted in renewed efforts to distinguish again between civil virtue and religion.<sup>29</sup> Although this anticlerical, deistic philosophy was mostly received by the German *Sturm-und-Dränger*, it also filtered through to characters like the precocious and effusive Van Goens (a member of high society if there ever was one). Inspired by Hemsterhuis, he wrote to two of his noble Austrian friends about his 'heureux système de Philantropie', a humanistic 'religion qui est instituée pour (. . .) nous faire sentir que nous sommes tous frères.'<sup>30</sup>

Homemade deist tracts were a rarity in the eighteenth-century Netherlands. The odd apology for a deism of sorts did appear now and then. *Religion devoid of superstition* was one instance that caused quite a commotion. In the foreword a certain 'Jonas Tauson'—actually the hack Piet Bakker—disingenuously claimed to publish the tract only so that modest Christians could refute it.<sup>31</sup> *Brute, or the virtuous freethinker*, was supposedly a true account of how one could be

<sup>29</sup> F. Hemsterhuis, 'Lettre sur les désirs' (1770), in: *Oeuvres philosophiques*, I, 49–69, at 63–66. Also 'Lettre sur l'homme et ses rapports' (1772), in: *Oeuvres philosophiques*, I, 135–152, including comments on the unhappy confusion of religion with civil virtue, and diatribes against 'la roideur, l'entêtement, la stupidité, le peu de lumieres et l'ambition outrée' of orthodoxy (142, 151). Both essays were dedicated to high-ranking magistrates.

<sup>30</sup> Wille, *Van Goens*, I, 301–302.

<sup>31</sup> [P. Bakker], *De godsdienst zonder bygeloof* (1755); see Evenhuis, *Ook dat was Amsterdam*, 194–198; Jongenelen no. 32. It was refuted by the Remonstrant Matthias van Goch (1691–1758), *De geopenbaarde godsdienst zonder bygeloof* [*Revealed religion devoid of superstition*] (1756).

an unbeliever and yet live virtuously.<sup>32</sup> Brute is portrayed as so stupid a Calvinist that it is not difficult to look favourably upon the virtuous freethinking Frederick, who draws his conclusions only from reason, and considers religion a useful political instrument to keep the world in its proper balance. 'Frederick', of course, was a popular name for such individuals ever since the Prussian king showed his true colours (his writings had been outlawed by the States of Holland in 1760).<sup>33</sup> Most unbelief came, or seemed to come, from abroad. Foreign writings of a positively egregious nature included those by Voltaire. The *Philosophical Miscellany*, published in 1773 by the fictitious 'C.H. Winnenbrugh' for the 'Company of Kleve, Wesel and Amsterdam', and qualified by reviewers as a godless lampoon, contained addresses held by English dissenters written in the blasphemous manner of French freethinkers. The third essay, on interpreting the Old Testament, ridiculed the Christian religion, while the seventh was an address propagating religious indifference, held in Basel by a certain Josiah Rosette—none other than Voltaire.<sup>34</sup> Van Goens in 1769 wrote a letter in praise of Voltaire to Gerard Roos Pz, a Rotterdam publicist and fervent devotee of the Frenchman. Roos in turn strove to convince Van Goens of Voltaire's many accomplishments, and laboured passionately to drive away the last defenders of obscurity, abiding the 'dawn of enlightened times'.<sup>35</sup> Roos spoke up for Voltaire's *Philosophie de l'histoire*, which had been outlawed by the Court of Holland in 1765.<sup>36</sup>

There was, then, probably more religious radicalism in the Dutch Republic than met the public eye. In any case, by the second half of the century, publishing apologies for Christianity had become sound investment policy. The tremendous success of apologies reflects the anxieties involved in the formation of the polite public. If articulate, civilized citizens were going to select their own preferred literature freely, they had to be able to choose from a variety of

<sup>32</sup> *Woestaart, of de deugdzaame vrijdenker* (s.a.); NB 1783-i, 99–101.

<sup>33</sup> *Jongenelen* nos. 71, 74.

<sup>34</sup> *Wijsgeerige mengelwerken* (1773); NB 1774/II-i, 13–29. According to the reviewer, the book contained nothing that had not already been refuted by the Scottish divine Robert Findlay (1721–1814) in his *Vindication of the Sacred Books* (1770), against Voltaire, and in Guenée's *Lettres de quelques Juifs Portugais* (see below).

<sup>35</sup> Quoted in Wille, *Van Goens*, I, 335–343.

<sup>36</sup> *Jongenelen* no. 108; a book by Roos in which he had denied the veracity of the Old Testament columns of fire was forbidden in 1768.

writings. It was this variety which Dutch authors, translators, editors and publishers for different reasons were keen to enlarge. All spokesmen for the polite public applauded such efforts. At the same time, however, they were concerned to define the religious limits of politeness. This is where apologies came in. The apology industry served to disqualify extremes on either side of the religious spectrum, on the one hand the radicals who exercised their freedom irresponsibly, and on the other the orthodoxies who denied religious liberty altogether. It behoved a polite individual to opt for Protestantism in one of its several varieties on the basis of convincing truth claims and appropriate proofs, and, above all, by his or her own volition. Persuasion rather than control had become the new moral basis of the public sphere.

Let us briefly review the apology industry. Bénédict Pictet's *Traité contre l'indifférence de religion* (1716) was reissued after half a century.<sup>37</sup> Jean Vernet's compilation of Turretini's Latin dissertations was translated as a defence of Christian truth, and according to the anonymous translator it could be easily read by average minds.<sup>38</sup> Christina de Neufville (1714–1781), a Mennonite poet and Wolffian philosopher, had already rejected scepticism and materialism in didactic verse, in 1741 and again in 1762.<sup>39</sup> Leonardus Stocke (1710–1775), a physician at Rotterdam, wrote an extensive Dutch-language refutation of La Mettrie in 1758.<sup>40</sup> Isaac de Pinto (1717–1787), a Sephardic aristocrat who became acquainted with the French *philosophes* during his stay in Paris, published a *Précis des arguments contre les matérialistes* in 1774.<sup>41</sup> The orthodox Cocceian Johannes Barueth opened a series of Dutch apologies with his *Sedate and modest rebuttal of contemporary deists and free-thinkers* (1767),<sup>42</sup> in which he resisted the attacks on Christianity in the notorious *Abrégé de l'histoire ecclésiastique de Fleury* (1766). Barueth's no less orthodox colleague, Johannes Claessen (1734–1812), wrote five treatises on unbelief, published as a *Simple domestic remedy for Christians against the unbelief which is becoming more and more*

<sup>37</sup> D.tr. B. Pictet, *Verhandeling tegen de onverschilligheid der godsdiensten* (1774); tr. by 'L.A.R.G.'; earlier editions appeared in 1724 and 1763.

<sup>38</sup> D.tr. J. Vernet, *Verhandeling van de waarheid van den christelyken godsdienst* (1736), preface.

<sup>39</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 133–142.

<sup>40</sup> L. Stocke, *Zelfs-kennis* [*Self-knowledge*] (1758); see Prins, 'Leonardus Stocke'.

<sup>41</sup> Wijler, *Isaac de Pinto*, 97–103; Nijenhuis, *Een joodse filosofie*.

<sup>42</sup> J. Barueth, *Zedige en bescheiden wederlegging der hedendaagsche deisten en vrygeesten* (1767).



*contagious nowadays* (1784).<sup>43</sup> Cornelis Cleyn (1723–1798), another Reformed preacher, threw in an account of *The excellence of the Christian religion over pagan philosophy* (1783).<sup>44</sup> The orthodox Reformed layman Hendrik Lussing (1724–1784) wrote a three-volume study on the necessity of religion in general and the excellence of Christianity in particular, against atheists, deists, pagans, Muslims, and Jews.<sup>45</sup> In the 1780s, IJsbrand van Hamelsveld published his enormously popular eight-volume *The Bible defended*, in imitation of a similar series by the German divine Lilienthal.<sup>46</sup> The Collegiant Jan Wagenaar attempted to find support for Christendom in his *Histories of the Christian Church during the first century* (1773), intended as a rebuttal of the ‘secret and oblique’ attacks that had become so common.<sup>47</sup>

Anti-deist writings translated from English, German and French appeared in stupefying abundance, testifying to the international as well as ecumenical nature of the enterprise.<sup>48</sup> Older works were re-issued, for instance by Pierre Allix,<sup>49</sup> Humphrey Ditton (1675–1715),<sup>50</sup> and Johann Lassenius (1636–1692), a famous Lutheran preacher and professor at Copenhagen.<sup>51</sup> The orthodox Scottish preacher John Bonar (1722–1761) contributed to the cause,<sup>52</sup> as did Johann Friedrich Häsel (1732–1797), a high-ranking and erudite clergyman at Brunswick who opposed materialism in his *Julius, oder von der Unster-*

<sup>43</sup> J. Claessen, *Eenvouwig huismiddel voor de Christenen* (1784).

<sup>44</sup> C. Cleyn, *De voortreffelijkheid van den Christelijken godsdienst boven de heidensche wijsgeerte* [*The excellence of the Christian religion over heathen philosophy*] (1783).

<sup>45</sup> H. Lussing, *De noodzakelykheid van den godsdienst, in 't gemeen* [*The necessity of religion, in general*] (1767–1774).

<sup>46</sup> IJ. van Hamelsveld, *De bijbel verdedigd* (1783–1788); on Lilienthal, see below.

<sup>47</sup> J. Wagenaar, *De geschiedenissen der Christelyke kerke* (1773); Wessels, *Bron, waarheid en de verandering der tijden*, 425.

<sup>48</sup> Translations of anti-deist writings began to appear late in the seventeenth century, including works by Humphrey Prideaux and John Tillotson.

<sup>49</sup> P. Allix, *Réflexions sur les livres de l'Écriture sainte* (1687); D.tr. *Redenmaatige bedenkingen over de boeken der H. Schrift* (1776); tr. by IJ. van Hamelsveld, who included a preface on the spread of deism.

<sup>50</sup> H. Ditton, *A discourse concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ* (1714); D.tr. *De christelijke godsdienst betoogd door de opstanding van Jesus Christus* (1779), with a preface by Petrus Nieuwland; the book was translated from the French version and based on an earlier Dutch translation (Amsterdam 1733) by Jacob van Ostade (1677–1745), a Reformed preacher.

<sup>51</sup> J. Lassenius, *Arcana politico-atheistica* (1738); possibly reprinted Amsterdam 1793; see *Boekzaal* 156 (1793), 545.

<sup>52</sup> [J. Bonar], *Observations on the conduct and character of Judas Iscariot* (1750); D.tr. *Aanmerkingen op het gedrag en het character van Judas Iscariot* (1754); tr. by Jacobus Warnier.

*blichkeit der Seelen* (1790).<sup>53</sup> In *Jesus Christus der Wahrheitslehrer kein Volkstäuscher* (1787), Georg F. Seiler demonstrated to both the Germans and the Dutch that Jesus was not an impostor.<sup>54</sup> Eric Pontoppidan (1698–1764), a pietist Lutheran bishop who had befriended Lampe in his youth, made a Danish contribution.<sup>55</sup> IJsbrand van Hamelsveld attempted to secure both natural and revealed religion by translating a German apologetic work—anonously, for the author proved to be a Catholic priest from München, Matthias von Schönberg (1734–1792).<sup>56</sup> An apology by Isaac Watts also contained an essay by Johannes Martinus Hoffmann (1696–1774), an orthodox Reformed preacher with a particular interest in apologetic writing, on unbelief and *libertinage*.<sup>57</sup> Johann Georg Pfranger (1745–1790), poet and court preacher of Duke Karl of Sachsen-Meinungen, disputed Lessing’s portrayal of Christians as sincere but foolish fanatics who still believed in divine Revelation.<sup>58</sup> The most popular apologist for Christianity was indubitably Christian Gellert. He proved the worth of the Christian religion not so much by argument as by his impeccable taste, refined intelligence, incomparable clarity, and heartfelt piety, all of which was quite sufficient to put to shame any scoffer.<sup>59</sup>

This catalogue probably reflects only the tip of the apologetic iceberg. Divines from all quarters and using all kinds of media attempted to sort out and contain the phenomenon of ‘unbelief’. The most popular periodical, the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oeffeningen*, girded its loins by publishing an ‘Historical account of the earliest deists’, based on a refutation of Gibbon by the Anglican divine East Apthorp (1733–1816).<sup>60</sup> Its orthodox companion, the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek*, in 1775

<sup>53</sup> D.tr. J.F. Häsel, *Julius, of over de onsterfkykheid der zielen* (1791).

<sup>54</sup> D.tr. G.F. Seiler, *Jesus Christus, de leeraar der waarheid, was geen volksbedrieger* (1791); the translation was dedicated to the *Haagsch Genootschap*.

<sup>55</sup> E. Pontoppidan, *Kragt der Waarheit, die atheïstische und naturalistische Ungläubigen zu besiegen* (1763); D.tr. [E. Pontoppidan], *Kragt der waarheid* (1767); translated by C.W.R. Scholten.

<sup>56</sup> D.tr. M. von Schönberg, *Bedenkingen van eenen wysgeer over den godsdienst* (1790).

<sup>57</sup> D.tr. I. Watts, *De waarschouwing tegen het ongelooft* (1763); I have not been able to ascertain the title of the original.

<sup>58</sup> [J.G. Pfranger], *Der Mönch von Libanon* (1782); D.tr. *De monnik van Libanon*, Deventer 1784, tr. by S. de Vries. The book was a refutation of Lessing’s *Nathan der Weise* (1779); the latter was a defence of deism in iambic verse, containing a plea for recognizing common humanity rather than tolerating aberrant religions. The play does not seem to have been particularly popular in the Netherlands.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. reviews of his writings in *NB* 1774-i, 603–608; *NB* 1775-i, 229–232; *NB* 1775-i, 318–325. Noordhoek, *Gellert und Holland*.

<sup>60</sup> *VL* 1779-ii, 197–203; E. Apthorp, *Letters on the prevalence of Christianity, before its*

included an account of the means to prevent the progress of free-thinking.<sup>61</sup> The confessional *Haagsch Genootschap* recruited a host of writers who concentrated on analyzing causes, suggesting remedies, and demonstrating that traditional doctrine was in all respects tenable. Between 1787 and 1796, the Society's transactions included numerous treatises on how to combat the modern adversaries of Christendom.<sup>62</sup> Another category of apologetic writings were the accounts of death row inmates who had prided themselves on being utterly devoid of Christian faith before giving in to persuasion. Adriaan Buurt (1711–1781), sent to prepare a twofold murderer spiritually prior to his execution, offered the public a report of how this avowed unbeliever had had to capitulate to Christendom.<sup>63</sup> Jan Scharp wrote an account of his conversations on fatalism, materialism and the origins of evil with a deistic Danish nobleman who was hanged for robbery (without, however, having been convinced).<sup>64</sup> Apologetic novels, too, began to appear. *Die Begebenheiten der Philippine Damien* (1769) by Johann Balthasar Kölbele (1722–1778), on a devout lady who withstood the temptations of freethinking, was signalled as the first of a new genre, the 'pious Novel'.<sup>65</sup>

Popular among apologetic writings were overviews of unbelief. The most celebrated was, of course, *A view of the principal deistical writers that have appeared in England during the last and present century* (1754–1756), by the learned nonconformist John Leland (1691–1766). The *View* was translated into Dutch in two volumes in 1765 and 1767, with the warm approval of the authoritative theological faculty of Utrecht.<sup>66</sup>

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*civil establishment* (1778). Cf. also *VL* 1784-ii, 231–241 + 323–329, 'Five original letters, written to a friend who inclined towards deism' (translated from the English); and *VL* 1787-ii, 237–244, an excerpt from a foreword to Priestley's *Experiments and observations relating to various branches of natural philosophy* (1779–1785).

<sup>61</sup> *NB* 1775-ii, 346–356, actually an excerpt from Ch.W.F. Walch's *Neueste Religions-Geschichte* (1771–1783) on the prohibition of deist writings in France.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. also the essay competition at Teyler's Theological Society on 'the unreasonableness of indifference'; entries published in *Verhandelingen TGG VIII*.

<sup>63</sup> *Kort verhaal van een gesprek tusschen eenen medeplichtigen aan twee moorden, en Adriaan Buurt* [A brief account of a conversation between an accomplice to two murders, and Adriaan Buurt] (1781); *NB* 1782-i, 31–33. The *NB* 1788-ii, 10–21, included an essay by 'K.P.' commending the care taken by the Dutch authorities to ensure the spiritual welfare of prisoners sentenced to death.

<sup>64</sup> Scharp, *Historische brieven* (1796).

<sup>65</sup> D.tr. J.B. Kölbele, *De geschiedenis van Philippine Mienda* (1771).

<sup>66</sup> D.tr. J. Leland, *Beschouwing van de voornaamste schriften der deisten* (1765–1767). The translator was Engelbert Noteboom. Possibly the Dutch clergy took their cue

The book was prefaced by Jacob Albert Vos (1723–1795), an erudite exegete who later became a theology professor at Harderwijk. Vos observed that Leland's book was among the best defences of Christendom produced by English apologists against English unbelief. He typically portrayed unbelief as progressing gradually and making victims especially among the upper-class youth. He claimed that the enemies of truth had propagated their views by publishing all kinds of books in large quantities, some of which were now sold openly on the Dutch market. Some years later, Hendrik G. Eskes, a Roman Catholic canon from Rees (now in Germany) provided an overview of the *Lives and writings of contemporary deists* (1782) which he, in turn, had mostly gleaned from a book by Johann Christoph Zabuesnig (1747–1827), a self-taught merchant at Augsburg.<sup>67</sup> Eskes sought to expose the subversive methods of unbelievers who tried to attack and eradicate Revelation under the deceptive cover of philosophy, teaching an arbitrary natural religion at the expense of the Bible. His list included sixteenth- and seventeenth-century 'atheists', ranging from Servet and Bruno to Spinoza and Hobbes, French freethinkers like d'Holbach, Diderot, Helvétius, La Mettrie and Voltaire, and the many English deists. The book also included a glossary of deist terms. In the philosophical tongue of the deists, 'Tolerantia' meant unrestrained indifference and the freedom to slander Christianity.<sup>68</sup>

Johannes F. Martinet provided a similar catalogue of unbelievers in his *History of the world* (1783).<sup>69</sup> He also added a list of apologists. In his view, the best English defenders of Revelation included Addison, Leland, Warburton, Chandler, Lardner, Ditton, Doddridge, and Rouston; the French had Hautteville and Guenée; among the Swiss and the Germans there were Sack, Haller, Turretin, Vernet, Bonnet,

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from the German translation of 1755; the foreword to this translation was quoted extensively in the preface to the Dutch edition.

<sup>67</sup> H.G. Eskes, *Leven en schriften der hedendaagsche wysgeeren* (1782). Eskes later wrote a pamphlet on toleration: *De tolerantie of verdraagzaamheid voor den gemeenen man* [*Tolerance or forbearance for the common man*] [1789]; he was considered in the Protestant press to be one of the less prejudiced Catholics: cf. *VB* 1796-i, 301–303. Zabuesnig (*Historische und kritische Nachrichten* (1777) was a translator of French books, and became a priest in 1817.

<sup>68</sup> *VL* 1782-i, 507–509; *NB* 1783-i, 344–351.

<sup>69</sup> Martinet, *Historie der waereld* (1780–1788), IV, 230, 237. Note that Mosheim wrote a history of deism, later continued by Gottfried Winkler (1739–1814), who made much use of Leland; Mosheim, *Geschichte der Feinde der christlichen Religion* (1782); D.tr. *Geschiednisse van de vyanden van den christelijken godsdienst* (1785), tr. by IJ. van Hamelsveld.

Lavater, Mosheim, Reimarus, Jerusalem, Lilienthal, Less, Nösselt and Goeze. The best defences available in the Dutch language were, interestingly, all of foreign origin. They included the *Lettres sur l'état présent du Christianisme* (1768) by Antoine-Jacques Roustan (1734–1808), preacher at the Swiss Reformed Church in London;<sup>70</sup> the popular *Apology for Christianity* (1776), in letters to Edward Gibbon, written by the bishop of Llandaff, Richard Watson (1737–1816);<sup>71</sup> the *Recherches philosophiques sur les preuves du Christianisme* (1770), by the Swiss naturalist Charles Bonnet (1720–1793);<sup>72</sup> the *Briefe über die wichtigsten Wahrheiten der Offenbarung* (1772) by the other Swiss naturalist, Albrecht von Haller (1708–1777);<sup>73</sup> the *Lettres de quelques Juifs Portugais et Allemands à M. de Voltaire* (1769) by Antoine Guinée (1717–1803);<sup>74</sup> and the *Vertheidigung der Wahrheit und Göttlichkeit der christlichen Religion* (1766) by Johann August Nösselt (1734–1807), professor of theology at Halle.<sup>75</sup>

Christian apologists, worried about the rise of unbelief, convinced themselves that there was at least one definite advantage to all this godlessness. They unanimously supposed that the attacks of unbelievers would lead to a wholesale reinforcement of the Christian faith. If we had not had Voltaire and Hume to contend with, said one commentator, we would not now have the excellent apologies of Jerusalem and Guinée.<sup>76</sup> The notion was widespread but particularly prevalent among academics. The Leiden divine Ewald Hollebeek, for instance, in 1780 addressed his academy with an address *De utilitate ex incredulorum contra sacras literas conaminibus in religionem Christianam redundante*. At the Deventer academy Jean Henri Pareau (1761–1833),

<sup>70</sup> D.tr. A.J. Roustan, *Brieven over den tegenwoordigen staat des christendoms* (1774).

<sup>71</sup> D.tr. R. Watson, *Brieven ter verdediging van den christelyken godsdienst* (1779). Gibbon's *History of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire* was not translated; an excerpt entitled 'On the religious toleration of the Romans' was included in the 1790s in the *Nieuwe bijdragen tot het menschelijk geluk* [*New contributions to human happiness*]; Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 178.

<sup>72</sup> D.tr. C. Bonnet, *Philosophische navorsingen van de bewyzen voor het christendom* (1771); with annotations by J.C. Lavater.

<sup>73</sup> D.tr. A. von Haller, *Brieven over de gewigtigste waarheden der Openbaaring* (1773). The orthodox regarded Haller as one of the most reliable apologists, since he explicitly defended the satisfaction of Christ; *NB* 1774/I-i, 630–634.

<sup>74</sup> D.tr. A. Guinée, *Brieven van eenige Portugeesche en Hoogduitsche Jooden* (1770–1782), tr. by Isaac de Pinto, who also included a tract written by himself.

<sup>75</sup> D.tr. J.H. Nösselt, *De waarheid en goddelijkheid van den Christelijken godsdienst* (1770), tr. by J.D. Deiman. A second edition was published in 1774, and a concise edition in 1783; the latter included a foreword by IJ. van Hamelsveld.

<sup>76</sup> *VB* 1793-i, 78–84. Even the *NB* 1774/I-i, 387–393, considered Jerusalem to be a first-rate apologist.

one of the leading Dutch orientalists, similarly instructed his listeners in 1789 with an oration *De conatibus incredulorum rei Christianae plus emolumenti quam detrimenti afferentibus*.<sup>77</sup> Pareau waxed lyrical about the new zeal exhibited by apologists to examine the truth, to prove the authenticity of Revelation and to reinterpret the Scriptures. Michael Szathmáry-Pap (1734–?), a Hungarian theologian who had studied at Geneva, Utrecht, and Leiden (and routinely won gold medals with essays he contributed to various Dutch societies), wrote a treatise for the *Haagsch Genootschap* in 1790 on how opposition to the Christian faith for centuries on end had actually served to affirm it. To this category of apologetics also belongs *Mein Glaube an die Lehren der göttlichen Offenbarung, gestärket und befestiget durch das fortgesetzte Betragen und die neuesten Schriften der Lehrer der reinen Vernunftreligion* (1791), by Johann Friedrich Jacobi (1712–1791), *Consistorialrat* in the principality of Lüneburg, and a very popular apologist in the Netherlands.<sup>78</sup>

To writers who supported the development of the polite religious public, unbelief held one other significant advantage next to stimulating the publication of apologies. In countering the doubters and the unbelievers, apologists availed themselves of the opportunity to refute views and traditions they considered obsolete. Pareau, for instance, was in favour of reinterpreting the Scriptures, but not just to prevent the spread of unbelief. He also wanted to get rid of the notions invented, as he put it, by ignorant or fanatic Christians in barbarous times. Significantly, he supported the reformation of theology in the German lands, although he was careful to point out that he rejected excesses. Likewise, in an earlier address *De divinae revelationis in Belgio contemptu, atque caussis eius praecipuis* (1765), Hollebeek examined the causes of the unhealthy desire to read damaging books, imported by the dozen from England and especially France—as if those produced in the Republic itself were not bad enough.<sup>79</sup> He distinguished between internal and external causes. Internal causes were the moral ones, such as intellectual extravagance, indolence, arrogance, ambition, and the sinful surrender to passions. External

<sup>77</sup> Pareau was a pupil of Hendrik A. Schultens and professor at the academy in Deventer since 1789, but was fired on account of his Orangism in 1795.

<sup>78</sup> D.tr. J.F. Jacobi, *Mijn geloof aan de leeringen der goddelijke openbaring gesterkt en bevestigd* (1791). Cf. also his *Was soll ich zur Beruhigung meiner Seele glauben?* (1790); D.tr. *Wat moet ik, ter geruststelling mijner ziel, gelooven?* (1790).

<sup>79</sup> Hollebeek mentioned only one deist tract: Louis Pierre de Longue, *Les princesses malabares, ou le celibat philosophique* (1735).

causes included improper upbringing and education, the proliferation of degenerate idlers who spread corrupt notions, the negligence of the clergy, and the immoral conduct of self-styled Christians. Hollebeek castigated the clergy at length for their incomprehensible sermons, for making dangerous comparisons between pagan fables and Scripture, for the one-sided emphasis on orthodoxy as opposed to piety, for extending the number of fundamental truths, for the exaggerated quest for spiritual meanings in the Bible, for farfetched and reckless analogies between the Bible and historical events, and for their numerous theological disputes. Most of Hollebeek's objections constitute a firm indictment of traditional Dutch orthodoxies, ranging from low pietist to high Cocceian.

Furthermore, the age-old dissension among the traditional clergy was itself regarded as at least one important reason for the unprecedented dissemination of unbelief in the modern era. The learned apothecary Cornelis van der Grijp (1737–?), chartered to write pastoral articles for a popular periodical, agreed that hatred and malice among theologians and the persecution of rational thinkers by the church had unquestionably fostered deism. Fortunately, the clergy was now kept under control by secular powers, although many of the former opponents of enthusiasm had in the meantime regrettably become downright deists.<sup>80</sup> Van der Grijp later continued his lament on the spread of unbelief and the tepidness of Christendom in a series of essays in which he mentioned disrespect for religion, the lack of pulpit eloquence, the neglect of harmony in public worship, and bitter partisanship in religious matters as the main causes of religious decline.<sup>81</sup> Still later in the century, when Priestley had made his remarkable entry onto the Dutch religious scene, one essay simply attributed unbelief to the 'corruptions of Christianity.'<sup>82</sup> In general, Christian apologists regarded the anticlerical criticism of deists and radical dissenters as an incentive to contribute to apologies that refrained from splitting doctrinal hairs and simplified Christendom to its purest fundamentals.

The number of apologetic writings appearing in Dutch in the second half of the century is impressive by any account. The question arises whether unbelief itself was really so much more widespread

<sup>80</sup> *VZ* 1775-ii, 437–443, 481–488.

<sup>81</sup> *VZ* 1778-ii, 193–205, 237–251, 281–287.

<sup>82</sup> *VZ* 1794-ii, 1–8; the essay was translated from the English.

than before. Given the difficulties in tracing the phenomenon in the closely monitored society of the Old Regime, the question is probably impossible to answer. However, two observations may be made. The first is that practically all divines emphasized that people were more religious in the past. A minister from Friesland assured the readers of the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* that the renowned naturalist Bernard Nieuwentyt (1654–1718), who was reputed to have been an atheist in his youth, had only frequented the gatherings of the godless to learn their deepest secrets and gainsay their views.<sup>83</sup> The implication was that Nieuwentyt's piety should be exemplary to those who now succumbed to religious corruption. Jeremiads denouncing today's iniquities and praising yesterday's virtues were as old as the Dutch Republic itself, and hardly prove that unbelief was actually stronger than before. The second observation is that after about 1750 more people began to operate beyond the direct control of the confessional public sphere. The development of an independent public, expected to determine its own religious beliefs, led to the exposure of the beliefs and unbeliefs of hitherto unexamined population groups. Whether unbelief increased in fact remains a moot question.

The dangers of adhering to unbelief in its various forms decreased substantially towards the end of the century. Unbelief was now given much greater latitude than before. The approach to atheism in the polite religious public of the later eighteenth century is exemplified by the *Selected treatises on philosophy and belle-lettres*, an anthology derived from the French-language publications of the Berlin Academy of Sciences.<sup>84</sup> The editor was Johan Frederik Hennert (1733–1813), professor of philosophy and mathematics at Utrecht. Hennert, an avowed disciple of English and Scottish empirical philosophers, was also one of the most important Dutch disseminators of German *Popularphilosophie*, with its penchant for practical morality, intellectual freedom, and bourgeois emancipation.<sup>85</sup> A German from Berlin who had studied under Sulzer, he contrasted the empiricists' emphasis on experience and common sense with the speculative metaphysics of Aristotle, Aquinas, Wolff, and Kant. He also argued in favour of reinterpreting

<sup>83</sup> *NB* 1784-ii, 210–213.

<sup>84</sup> *Uitgeleezene verhandelingen over de wysgeerte en fraaje letteren getrokken uit de werken der Koninglyke Akademie der Weetenschappen te Berlyn* (1780–1795).

<sup>85</sup> On *Popularphilosophie*, see Van der Zande, 'In the image of Cicero'; Vierhaus, 'Moses Mendelssohn'; also section 7.4 below.



Spinoza, who in his view could be understood only as an Idealist. There was little use in simply disqualifying him as an atheist, since this contributed neither to a better understanding of Spinoza nor to greater insight into atheism. And such insight was greatly needed. 'Who could suspect that in our days, alas!' lamented Hennert, 'there exist more *Atheists* than some *Theologians* appear to imagine.' Hennert believed it more necessary than ever to distinguish between different forms of atheism, and advised every theologian to devote one whole year to an examination of the phenomenon. Emotional denunciations and disparagements of atheism ought to be avoided, since these were at odds with Christian charity and in any case counter-productive.<sup>86</sup> Hennert included several of his own essays on Spinoza in the first volume of his series, and subsequently published essays by Formey, Merian, Sulzer, and many others (most of which were translated, incidentally, by Reformed theology students). He himself wrote an extensive essay on atheism in which he discussed radical works by Toland, d'Holbach, Hume, and the sceptical physician George Hoggart Toulmin.<sup>87</sup>

An essay called 'Thoughts on godlessness and religious indifference', summed up the premises of the polite attitude towards unbelief.<sup>88</sup> Religion, claimed the author, offers man reassurance concerning his afterlife, but also prevents moral corruption. Religion is an inward compulsion that binds the will to the practice of virtue. Deeply rooted in human nature, the basis for this compulsion is the universal urge of civilized humanity to have religion. Hence, human nature is perfectly compatible with free inquiry. Freethinkers, however, allow passion to rule their understanding, so that freethinking may be defined as a dishonest inquiry into religion. In consequence, humankind can be divided into two groups: those who inwardly value religion and those who do not. Those who belong to the first group are one of two kinds: they are either reasonable believers, who hold '*real tenets*'; or deficient believers, who err innocently. Those who do not inwardly value religion are either outright unbelievers or indifferentists who regard religion as a useful instrument for keeping the populace in check. The only distinction between indifferentists and public scorers

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<sup>86</sup> *Uitgeleezene verhandelingen*, I (1780), preface.

<sup>87</sup> *Uitgeleezene verhandelingen*, III (1782), 404–509.

<sup>88</sup> *VB* 1796-ii, 193–203, 241–253.

of religion is that the former pretend to be devoted to a religion when in fact they do not have one, whereas the latter openly admit that they spurn religion. Indifferentism itself is either refined or coarse. Refined indifferentists value religion as a means to avoid greater evils, obtain psychological benefits, or (as in Hobbes and Spinoza) support the state. Coarse indifferentism is simply unqualified fraud. The upshot of such accounts was that unbelief was no longer regarded as an outright subversion of the religious public, but an unfortunate lapse that could be amended by the moulding of deluded unbelievers into polite citizens.

## 6.2 THE GERMAN NEW REFORMERS

Apologies thus played a significant role in the development of the polite public. Emphasizing conviction and conversion over authoritarianism, they made varieties of belief and unbelief debatable and tolerable. They also tended to be useful double-edged swords, in that they refuted the common fiends of atheism and deism, and at the same time served to undermine the position of traditional orthodoxies. What to do, for instance, with the *Confidence philosophique* (1771) by the Swiss pastor Jacques Vernes (1728–1791)? The Dutch translator (who did not reveal his name) announced the book—a series of letters from a student of deist philosophy to his master—as a defence of Christendom, but also claimed that it demonstrated the dissipation to which superstitious education and religious hypocrisy could lead.<sup>89</sup> And what to think of the distinguished Johann Jacob Hottinger (1750–1819), the Swiss Reformed philologist who refuted d'Holbach's *Système de la nature* (1770) while observing that such debauched writings were really caused by the fanaticism of superstitious orthodoxies?<sup>90</sup> Ernst Platner (1744–1818), professor of medicine at Leipzig, combated David Hume in a celebrated dialogue, *Über den Atheismus* (1783). Platner had a Christian apologist explain the many faults in Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (1779),

<sup>89</sup> D.tr. [Jacques Vernes], *De wysgeerige leerstellingen, inborst en zeden van eenen heden-daagschen deïst* (1772). Vernes maintained contacts with Rousseau and Voltaire.

<sup>90</sup> J.J. Hottinger, *De nonnullorum in oppugnanda religionis ineptiis ac malis artibus* (1774); NB 1775-i, 370–378. Hottinger defended theologians like Ernesti, Semler, Spalding, Eberhard, and Teller.

but simultaneously showed that theologians, by exaggerating orthodox notions, themselves fostered unbelief.<sup>91</sup>

Apologies for Christianity, then, were never unambiguous—which brings us back to the devious methods used by the German reformers. The orthodox *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* of 1785 included an extensive essay, translated from the German, on the ‘artifices’ used by contemporary unbelievers to disprove religion by means of the Bible, and the Bible by means of religion. These artifices included an exorbitant praise of the Bible, Christian moral teaching and toleration, the camouflaged suppression of traditional doctrine, and the unconditional renunciation of theological systems and confessions.<sup>92</sup> Orthodox commentators agreed that all controversial German and English religious writers now used such theological methods, putting Voltaire’s open disparagement of Christendom in the shade.<sup>93</sup> In this section we shall discuss the general Dutch response towards the rise of the German ‘new reformers’, in particular Töllner, Steinbart, and Purgold.

Dutch clergymen who entertained confessional sympathies did not accuse all German apologists of deception. One important exception to the rule was Theodor Christoph Lilienthal (1717–1781), a Lutheran theologian at Königsberg. His 16-volume *magnum opus* was an account of Revelation, ‘wider die Feinde derselben erwiesen und gerettet’. Translating this multi-volume series was a major project which began in 1766 and ended in 1785; it was considered a significant enterprise, for Lilienthal too contradicted the ‘cunning means’ used by freethinkers to subvert Christianity by ridiculing the Bible.<sup>94</sup> Confessional divines tended to regard the German apologist as a valuable ally. True, he was distinctly Lutheran, but for any Calvinist of the 1770s unadulterated Lutheranism had become a rare, unequivocal, and welcome sign of orthodoxy. Lilienthal’s defence of universal grace

<sup>91</sup> D.tr. E. Platner, *Philosophisch gesprek over de ongodistery* (1784); VL 1784-i, 603–610; NB 1785-i, 28–30. On Platner, see Gawlick and Kreimendahl, *Hume in der deutschen Aufklärung*, 133–136.

<sup>92</sup> NB 1785-ii, 349–374, 397–418, 433–450.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. the *Briefe des Grafen Cataneo* (1769); D.tr. as *Brief aan den heere Van Voltaire* (1774): a satirical letter about the fact that Voltaire had simply done what many theologians were doing now, the main difference being that the theologians were servants of the state.

<sup>94</sup> T.C. Lilienthal, *Die gute Sache der in der Heiligen Schrift alten und neuen Testaments enthaltenen göttlichen Offenbarung* (1750–1782); D.tr. *Oordeelkundige Bybelwerklaaring* (1766–1785); VL 1768-i, 89; cf. NB 1788-i, 142–143. Johannes Martinus Hoffmann separately published his introduction to the series in 1775.

was easily compensated for by his views on the atonement and other 'pillars of Christendom'.<sup>95</sup> This orthodox sense of ecumenism in the face of the widespread heterodox threat to confessional religion was evident also in the way other German apologists were received. Johann F. Jacobi wrote the irenical *Abhandlungen über wichtige Gegenstände der Religion* (1773–1778), in which he defended miracles and divine inspiration against new-fangled reformers claiming to reduce Christendom to its pristine purity and simplicity.<sup>96</sup> Even an otherwise critical periodical praised Jacobi for his open-mindedness, moderation, simple style, leniency, politeness, and frankness, in spite of his evident limitations as an orthodox apologist.<sup>97</sup>

It took some time before the orthodox became aware that the insidious threat from Germany had substituted the menace from England and France.<sup>98</sup> In 1786 a certain 'C.V.S.', possibly Daniel A. Reguleth (1749–1794), one of the founders of the *Haagsch Genootschap*, caused a controversy by publishing a series of letters, supposedly written by a number of Jews who rejoiced in the reduction of positive Christianity to pure deism.<sup>99</sup> The author, shocked by translations of Joseph Priestley's *Corruptions* as well as Steinbart's *System*, denounced a sequence of writings by German and English divines, many of which had been rendered into Dutch. Embroidering on the early heretics and English and French deism, they clearly represented a modern conspiracy to undermine Christianity. The anonymous author's list included Bahrdt, Semler, Eberhard, Teller, Damm, Nicolai and Jerusalem among the Germans, and Warburton, Priestley, Lindsey and Evanson among the English. The *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* reacted with a highly critical review to these 'Jewish' letters, and so did several Dutch writers, who condemned the book as base, wicked,

<sup>95</sup> NB 1775-i, 142–146; NB 1778-i, 531–533 (reviews of T.C. Lilienthal's sermons: *Heilige leerredenen* (1774–1779), tr. by L.G. Cordes).

<sup>96</sup> D.tr. J.F. Jacobi, *Verhandelingen over enige gewichtige stukken van den godsdienst* (1788); tr. by D.C. van Voorst.

<sup>97</sup> *De Recensent* III (1792), 1–25.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *De Berlynsche wysgeer, of vorstlyke beschouwer* [*The Berlin philosopher, or princely observer*; I have not been able to determine the original] (1760), an anthology of essays that was introduced as an important apologetic work. Volume II, 38–52, includes an essay on the 'gentle concord and perfect unanimity of the early Christians'.

<sup>99</sup> [C.V.S.], *Brieven van eenige Jooden, over den tegenwoordigen toestand van den Christelijken godsdienst* [*Letters by several Jews on the present condition of the Christian religion*] (1786). Another specific attack on the new reformers was C.W. Muis, *De oude en beproefde leere der hervormde kerk schriftuurlijk verdedigd* [*The old and tested doctrine of the Reformed Church defended scripturally*] (1793).

unreliable and despicable.<sup>100</sup> The letters were likened to a recent German attack on Bahrtdt, the *Brief eines reisenden Juden über den gegenwärtigen Zustand des Religionswesens unter den Protestanten* (1776), by Heinrich E. Teuthorn.<sup>101</sup>

As late as 1787 a Dutch translation appeared of Thomas Abbt's famous and satirical *Erfreuliche Nachricht von einem hoffentlich bald zu errichtenden protestantischen Inquisitionsgerichte* (1766). One reviewer welcomed it as an excellent lampoon of all persecuting clerics. In Abbt's satire, Goeze acts as the head inquisitor appointed to examine four groups of theologians: those who put through doctrinal changes (Damm, Teller, Basedow), philologists and Bible critics (Michaelis, Ernesti, Semler, Spalding), non-Christian philosophers (the Jew Mendelssohn), and satirists (Klotz).<sup>102</sup> The Dutch public received a lot more information on the questionable goings-on in Germany when IJsbrand van Hamelsveld (who himself showed a critical interest in the new German theology) translated some of the 19 volumes of *Die neueste Religionsbegebenheiten, mit unpartheiischen Anmerkungen* (1778–1796).<sup>103</sup> The *Neueste Religionsbegebenheiten*, written by Heinrich M.G. Köster (1734–1802), a versatile professor of history and economics at Giessen, and an orthodox Lutheran, comprised an overview of recent theological developments in Germany. They were regarded as partial, but not excessively so.<sup>104</sup> All the same, Köster made clear that the new reformers—Bahrtdt, Semler, Teller, Damm, Töllner,

<sup>100</sup> VL 1786-i, 90–92, 309–310; VL 1787-ii, 237. A *Bericht wegens de zoogenaamde brieven* (. . .) [*Report regarding the so-called letters* (. . .)], [1787] attributes the letters to Reguleth. Cf. also *Drie brieven van Janus Phileusebius* [*Three letters by* (. . .)] (1786).

<sup>101</sup> Translated as *De tolerantie, als een vrugt van vernuft en menschlyfde* [*Tolerance as a fruit of understanding and love for man*] (1778); it also included an attack on Nicolai's *Sebaldus Nothanker*. The Dutch translator recommended the book as an antidote to the subversive new reformers. It was praised in NB 1778-i, 326–332, 553–557, for using satirical methods to defend orthodoxy against the advocates of universal toleration. Hofstede praised it in a personal letter to a friend; De Bie, *Petrus Hofstede*, CIII.

<sup>102</sup> Tr. by Betje Wolff; Van der Vliet, *Wolff en Deken's brieven van Abraham Blankaart*, 26, 118–140.

<sup>103</sup> D.tr. [Köster], *Berichten betreffende de nieuwe hervormers* (1791). An excerpt from the *Neueste Religionsbegebenheiten* had been published earlier in NB 1779-ii, 380–392, 417–436, 453–473. In the same issue of the NB there is an extensive translation of a 'Treatise on the corruption of freedom of thought, particularly in respect of religion, which reigns also among theologians', by Christian Gotthold Seydlitz (1730–1808), professor of philosophy at Copenhagen (NB 1779-ii, 229–249, 269–289, 305–333, 355–379, 395–416, 437–453).

<sup>104</sup> VL 1791-i, 556–557.

Steinbart, Eberhard, Nicolai, Spalding—were little more than a flock of disguised Arminians and Socinians who had read too deeply in unsavoury English books and put little value, or none at all, on the divinity of Christ, the atonement, original sin, the sacraments, the spiritual world, and divine inspiration. One year later the biting *Briefe über die neuen Wächter der protestantischen Kirche* (1778) by Simon L.E. de Marées (1717–1802), court preacher at Dessau, appeared in Dutch translation.<sup>105</sup> The ‘new guardians’ chosen by De Marées included Johann Erich Biester (1749–1816) and Nicolai, the editors of the *Berlinische Monatschrift* and the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*, who had been warning regularly against growing Papism among the Protestant clergy. De Marées even attacked the reviewers of the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen*, putting them on a par with Nicolai. The Dutch reviewers took exception to this, and haughtily observed that the *Monthly Review* was their model, and that they anyhow did not stoop to partiality.<sup>106</sup>

These orthodox German counterattacks perpetuated Dutch anxieties about a conspiracy of unbelievers intent on undermining traditional Christianity. In the wake of the German reaction to the French Revolution, books containing relevant source material in extensive appendices started to appear in Dutch, discussing the secret union allegedly aimed at subverting both the Christian faith and the monarchical states.<sup>107</sup> The most popular among them was written by Leopold Alois Hoffmann (1760–1806), an Austrian reactionary who published his politico-religious views in the *Wiener Zeitschrift* of 1792, and designated himself a friend of princes and the true Enlightenment. This warning by a Roman Catholic against the ‘contemporary Philosophers and new Reformers’, with their so-called ‘popular Enlightenment’ and their secret societies, was highly opportune, according to the anonymous translator. For even in the Republic the new principles were subverting church and state and destroying the national character,

<sup>105</sup> D.tr. S.L.E. de Marées, *Brieven, over de nieuwe wachters der Protestantsche kerke* (1792). Cf. also Gabriel C.B. Mosche (1723–1791), *Der Bibelfreund* (1770–1779); D.tr. *De Bijbel-Vriend, een theologisch weekchrift* (1773–1782), tr. by A.F. Klenke, who published the first three volumes at his own expense; see also the review in *NB* 1783-i, 28–30.

<sup>106</sup> *VL* 1792-i, 410–412; *VL* 1793-i, 65–68; De Marées also refuted Mendelssohn and Lessing.

<sup>107</sup> E.g. D.tr. *Berichten van een groot maar onzichtbaar verbond, tegen den christelijken godsdienst*, Leiden [1794], purportedly an excerpt from a work by H.M.G. Köster and tr. by Van Hamelsveld; see *Heinemeyer* F-Ha: 278.

as evidenced recently by the Patriots. The translator suggested that only the spread of 'biblical enlightenment' could still save the nation. He even accused the *Abt* Jerusalem, who to many supporters of theological renewal was the flagship of moderate criticism, of obscuring the Christian Revelation.<sup>108</sup>

The danger presented by the new Reformers was regarded variously by different commentators; nor was it always absolutely clear who, exactly, was supposed to belong to this group. Thus, it was not certain whether the well-known Reformed minister at Berlin, August Friedrich Sack (1703–1786), was a member of the perfidious theological coterie. Commentators considered his *Verteidigter Glaube der Christen* (1748–1751) an important apology against unbelief—one of the first, in fact, to be imported from Germany. Still, the foreword to Sack's book ruminated on the freedom to inquire into Scripture.<sup>109</sup> Sack's *Conseils d'un ami à un jeune homme qui entre dans le monde* (1764) contained a plea for natural theology which orthodox reviewers frowned upon.<sup>110</sup> Another valued and relatively harmless apologist was Johann August Nösselt, whose popular book against atheists, sceptics, naturalists and indifferentists we have already encountered. Nösselt was regarded as John Leland's German counterpart. The same applied to Gottfried Less (1736–1797), a theologian at Göttingen whose *Beweis der Wahrheit der christlichen Religion* (1769) was also thankfully translated.<sup>111</sup> Less, again, was an ambivalent writer. He contended that Christ had also died for those heathens who had led moral

<sup>108</sup> [L.A. Hoffmann], *Ernstige en trouwhartige waarschouwing aan de grooten deezer waereld* [*Serious and candid warning to the great of this world*] (1792, 3rd ed.); the first edition was sold out within three weeks. A response to Hoffmann was also translated: A. Knigge, *Joseph von Wurmbrand (. . .) politisches Glaubensbekenntniß, mit Hinsicht auf die französische Revolution* (1792); D.tr. *Staatkundige geloofsbedydenis* (1792). Cf. also the conservative Karl von Eckartshausen, *Über Religion, Freydenkery und Aufklärung* (1786); D.tr. *Wijsgeerige bedenkingen over den godsdienst, de vrijdenkerij en opheldering des verstands* (1786).

<sup>109</sup> D.tr. A.F.W. Sack, *De redenerende Kristen* (1752, 1768), tr. by F. Houttuyn. Sack's foreword on 'Christian prudence, freedom and forbearance' was later included in the *Uitgezogte verhandelingen over onderwerpen tot den godsdienst (. . .) betrekkelijk* [*Selected treatises on topics concerning religion*] (1782); this collection contained translations of foreign (especially German) writings, and was published by a 'Society of Lovers of Free and Peaceful Inquiry.' NB 1783-i, 152–156, rejected Sack's essay as an attempt to undermine the status of confessions.

<sup>110</sup> D.tr. A.F.W. Sack, *Raadgevingen van een vriend aan eenen jongeling* (1775); NB 1776-i, 461–467.

<sup>111</sup> D.tr. G. Less, *Bewijs der waarheid van den christelijken godsdienst* (1771, 1778). The book contained a foreword by Nicolaus Barkey.

lives, which around 1770 was a hotly debated issue. Alternatively, he was prepared to resign from office on account of this unorthodox conviction—until he opportunely found out that the Lutheran confessions did not rule out the possibility that Christ had also expiated the sins of heathens. For all his dubious contentions, said the reviewers, Less, at least, seemed a principled man.<sup>112</sup>

But there were Germans much worse than Sack, Nösselt and Less, particularly in the Prussia of Frederick the Great. Despite Lessing's habitual complaints about the lack of liberty in Prussia, many of the more critical minds worked there. There was Johann August Hermes (1736–1822), for example, a pastor at Quedlinburg and one of the three popular and oft-translated Hermes brothers. His *Handbuch der Religion* (1779) was written well, but it showed a suspicious propensity towards sacrificing a good many fundamental truths for the sake of 'forbearance and peace'.<sup>113</sup> By contrast, less orthodox reviewers praised his genius, tastes, philosophical judgement and insight into the 'true spirit' of the Gospel. Regarded as systematizers of the new theology were Johann Christoph Döderlein (1746–1792) at Jena, and Samuel F.N. Morus (1736–1792), Ernesti's pupil and successor at Leipzig; both were accessible in Latin with respectively an *Institutio theologi Christiani* (1784) and an *Epitome theologiae Christianae* (1789).<sup>114</sup> Since many new reformers will be mentioned elsewhere, I shall examine only a few notorious specimens in this section, beginning with Töllner and Steinbart, professors of Reformed theology at Frankfurt an der Oder.

Johann Gottlieb Töllner (1724–1774) was an acknowledged expert at trimming down traditional Christendom to what he regarded as its fundamentals. Early in his career, he had tried to solve the problems related to Lutheran-Reformed differences on the Eucharist. He was known in the Republic as an advocate of natural theology, and his expertise in this field was evident from two short tracts, *Meine*

<sup>112</sup> *NB* 1778-i, 521–531.

<sup>113</sup> D.tr. J.A. Hermes, *Godsdienstig handboek* (1782); *NB* 1782-i, 463–471; *VB* 1790-i, 301–307. Of his brothers, Johann Timotheus was a popular novelist, Hermann Daniel an orthodox advocate of Wöllner's *Religionsedikt*.

<sup>114</sup> *PGVCG* (1791), 19. Döderlein's book appeared in a Dutch abridgement as *Onderwijs in den christelijken godsdienst naar de behoeften van onzen tijd* [*Instruction in the Christian religion according to the needs of our times*] (1792); the translator, who claimed to correspond with Döderlein, praised the latter's 'biblical' (as opposed to scholastic) theology.



*Überzeugungen* (1769) and *Meine Vorsätze* (1771), both very popular in Germany, and both translated into Dutch.<sup>115</sup> Töllner apparently sent copies to someone in the Netherlands, possibly Christiaan C.H. van der Aa (1718–1793), a Lutheran preacher at Haarlem. The booklets made clear that Revelation was a safer bet than nature, explaining which fundamentals of natural and revealed religion reasonable Christians should be familiar with, and which duties they should perform. Töllner's reputation as a trail-blazer for the new reformers was established when a number of his essays were included in the four instalments of the *Specimens of contemporary German taste in matters concerning theology and philosophy* (1773–1775), a series of German treatises translated and annotated by Johannes Petsch.<sup>116</sup> Petsch, who was particularly interested in disseminating Wolffian philosophy, observed that contemporary Germans deviated from traditional theological practice in that they established the necessity of various truths by showing that they conduced to moral improvement (the new reformers therefore had little use for abstruse mysteries which few people understood). They demonstrated 'a great and Pious circumspection in determining what are called the *fundamental Articles of Faith*,' and concerned themselves with expanding Christ's 'Kingdom of truth' rather than founding organized orthodoxies. One of Töllner's methods was to demote the status of the Epistles to mere supplements, so that the specific doctrines they contained could easily be overruled by the simple teachings of Christ in the Gospels. Töllner was not half as radical as his successor Steinbart, however; in one of his essays, for instance, he was concerned to point out that the church was divinely instituted. The essays seem to have sold rather badly.<sup>117</sup>

To the greater part of the Dutch clergy, the *bête noire* of German priesthood was definitely Gotthilf Samuel Steinbart (1738–1800), Töllner's successor to the theological chair at Frankfurt an der Oder.

<sup>115</sup> D.tr. [J.G. Töllner], *Myne overtuigingen* (1771); D.tr. [J.G. Töllner], *Myne voormeemens betreffende den godsdienst* (1773).

<sup>116</sup> J. Petsch ed., *Proeven van den tegenwoordigen smaak der Hoogduitschers* (1773–1775); the essays were taken from Töllner's *Kurze vermischte Aufsätze* (1767–1770). The series also included a contribution by Spalding. On Petsch, see also section 7.4.

<sup>117</sup> *VL* 1773-i, 315–316; *VL* 1774-i, 103–108; *NB* 1774/II-i, 80–104; *NB* 1777-i, 555–568. The *Proeve* was also reviewed in the *Journal Encyclopédique* (1773), T. IV-ii, 362–363 and (1774), T. V-I, 186–187. Töllner's various *Grundrisse* (D.tr. J.G. Töllner, *Korte christlyke godgeleerdheid en zedekunde* (1774), with a foreword by C.C.H. van der Aa) were regarded as contributions to ecumenical understanding because they focused on fundamentals; *VL* 1774-i, 585–586.

His *System der reinen Philosophie oder Glückseligkeitslehre des Christentums* (1778) settled his reputation as one of the most outrageous among the new reformers.<sup>118</sup> The fact that the book was often mentioned in one breath with Priestley's *Corruptions* speaks volumes,<sup>119</sup> and only one (less reputable) review periodical dared discuss the Dutch translation.<sup>120</sup> Steinbart contended that man could attain a certain degree of felicity in this life by knowing and practising Christianity. As a system promoting felicity, Christianity should be regarded as consisting only of those doctrines which the various denominations have always recognized, and in Steinbart's view these were very few indeed. All other doctrines could be disregarded without forfeiting salvation. To provide efficacious instruction, ministers should accommodate these simple teachings to the particular ecclesiastical customs of their home countries and the intellectual capacity of their listeners, just as Jesus and the apostles had done. In the final analysis, however, differences between denominations were quite irrelevant. It was bad enough, grumbled his critics, that Steinbart undermined the fundamentals of Calvinism (he regarded Augustine as a Manichean), but like the dissenter Priestley, this established academic even went so far as to reject Christian orthodoxy. The periodicals did review refutations of Steinbart's book. The most important was the rebuttal by a Frisian minister, Jacob E. Mebius (1749–1838), a close friend of one of the later initiators of the *Haagsch Genootschap*, Johannes Knepelhou (1745–1803).<sup>121</sup> A novelist heartily criticized Steinbart's *System* as a book that was one step, if not less, removed from deism.<sup>122</sup> By contrast, anonymous radicals and a number of impetuous dissenters<sup>123</sup> praised Steinbart's

<sup>118</sup> D.tr. G.S. Steinbart, *Samenstel der zuivere wysbegeerte, of leere der gelukzaligheid, volgens het Christendom* (1781). Also G.S. Steinbart, *Philosophische Unterhaltungen zur weiteren Aufklärung der Glückseligkeitslehre* (1782); D.tr. *Wysgeerige ophelderingen* (1782–1787). The latter work was Steinbart's reply to his many German critics.

<sup>119</sup> E.g. *VL* 1795, I, 89.

<sup>120</sup> *Algemeene Bibliotheek* II (1778), 438–446, with a very matter-of-fact and non-committal account; for Priestley's *Corruptions*, see *Algemeene Bibliotheek* IV (1784), 599–623.

<sup>121</sup> [J.E. Mebius], *Brieven van G.N. en V.v.O.* [*Letters by (. . .)*] (1785); *NB* 1785-i, 400–407. Mebius contributed to the *Haagsch Genootschap* with an essay on the beneficial influence of mysteries on our spiritual well-being and moral conduct (1787).

<sup>122</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Historie van den heer Willem Leevend*, Part VIII, 126–127: the *System* resembled the Gospel teachings as much as Socrates did Christ.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. for instance *Verhandelingen TGG* VI, which included essays on the impossibility of undermining the authority of Revelation through 'true philosophy'. An essay by Pieter Verstap praised the 'reformer of our time, the clever Steinbart!' (245).

ideas, including his ‘Theological Forbearance’, which contrasted so sharply with the intolerant zeal of Lutheran orthodoxy.<sup>124</sup> Having sharply criticized the Dutch for continuing the obsolete practice of implementing religious formularies and continuously reproducing the prejudice of the past, a writer praised Steinbart as one of the ‘noble counsellors of humanity.’<sup>125</sup>

A third particularly odious exemplar of German theological intemperance was Daniel Heinrich Purgold (1708–1788). His *Resultat meines mehr als fünfzigjährigen Nachdenkens über die Religion Jesu* (1783) laid down the outcome of a protracted inquiry into religious truths.<sup>126</sup> After 51 years of loyal service to the Lutheran church in Magdeburg, this critical septuagenarian (and contributor to the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek*) expressed his Arian, Socinian and Pelagian doubts concerning traditional doctrine. His book was dedicated to a Prussian minister of state, and thus had the semblance of being an authoritative document. But the dedication did not help. Already scandalized by Steinbart and Priestley, the Dutch clergy laboured to rid the country of the most recent nuisance—a divine who had no compunction in accepting a salary paid to him for explaining doctrines he did not teach.<sup>127</sup> One particularly irate orthodox critic called for a ban on the book, since Purgold was no better than Bahrdt, Steinbart, Semler, or Teller.<sup>128</sup> Indeed, in a number of towns copies of the book were confiscated and their sale forbidden. One periodical had earlier included an excerpt from another treatise by Purgold, in which the German divine announced that, following the reformation of theology, no reasonable Protestant could any longer support the Athanasian Creed.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>124</sup> *Drie brieven van Janus Phileusebius*, 43–44.

<sup>125</sup> *De Recensent I* (1787), 34. There was one attempt to emulate the *System*, by a Remonstrant, Cornelis Maas († 1810): *Onderwijzing in den weg ter gelukzaligheid volgens de leer van Jesus Christus [Instruction in the way to felicity according to the doctrine of Jesus Christ]* (1792); see *VB* 1793-i, 69–72.

<sup>126</sup> D.tr. D.H. Purgold, *Resultaat van mijne meer dan vijftigjarige overdenkingen* (1790); translated by ‘J.C.S.’ Cf. the reviews: *VL* 1791-i, 246–250 (positive but very careful); *VB* 1791-i, 289–298 (moderately critical).

<sup>127</sup> Scharp, *Godgeleerd-historische verhandeling*, 68 note.

<sup>128</sup> Carel Pantekoek, *Korte aanmerkingen op Het resultaat (. . .) [Brief comments on (. . .)]* (1791).

<sup>129</sup> *VB* 1790-ii, 337–350, 385–398: Purgold, *Was hat Luther für ein Recht gehabt zu reformiren? Was für ein recht haben die jetzigen Theologen? Welches ist das non plus ultra der protestantischen Kirche?* (1785). A tract attributed to Purgold, on Wöllner’s *Religionsedikt*, was included in *VB* 1791-ii, 49–61.

Töllner, Steinbart and Purgold provide only some examples of the many ways in which public orthodoxy was undermined, or, to put it another way, in which Christian fundamentals were promoted. German divines soon developed a reputation for revolutionizing theology, and we shall see that their influential ideas on biblical criticism and church history had a particular bearing on the Dutch toleration debate. In addition, they took over the lead in pulpit oratory from the English, emphasizing morality over doctrine.<sup>130</sup> Using psychological arguments, they demythologized accounts of spirits, mediums, premonitions, and visions, regardless of whether they were based on biblical testimony or not.<sup>131</sup> The defenders of confessional Christendom geared up for a massive counter-attack. In spite of his objections to granting the Hamburg Calvinists freedom of worship, Goeze made something of a career among Dutch Calvinists in the wake of his less reputable countrymen, above all Bahrtdt.<sup>132</sup> The main opponent of the radical new reformer Johann Joachim Spalding (1714–1804) was also Lutheran, the later theology professor at Kiel Johann Andreas Cramer (1723–1788).<sup>133</sup> Illustrative of the way the orthodox themselves participated in the polite public was an anonymous essay published in 1789 in a periodical edited by the divine Dirk Cornelis van Voorst (1752–1833). The essay suggested ways to prevent illiterate Christians

<sup>130</sup> *Magazin für Prediger* (1781), by C.F. Bahrtdt; translated as *Zedelijk Magazijn [Moral Magazine]* (1787); review in *NB* 1788-i, 256–263.

<sup>131</sup> E.g. the philosopher at Frankfurt an der Oder, Justus Christian Hennings (1731–1815) with, among other writings, *Von Geistern und Geistersehern* (1780); D.tr. *Onzydige en beproefde gedagten, over de leer aangaande geesten en geestenzienders* (1786–1789). C.A.L. Kirchhoff, *Vollständige Beantwortung der Frage: Was lässt sich nach Vernunft und Schrift vom Teufel glauben?* (1789); D.tr. *De vraag: wat volgens reden en schriftuur van den duivel te geloven zy? volledig beantwoord* (1790).

<sup>132</sup> E.g. J.M. Goeze, *Beweis, dass die Bahrdtsche Verdeutschung des Neuen Testaments keine übersetzung, sondern eine vorsätzliche Fälschung und frevelhafte Schändung der Worte des lebendigen Gottes sei* (1773); D.tr. *Beweis, dat doctor Bahrdts Vertaaling (. . .)* (1778). On Goeze, see Harald Schultze, ‘Toleranz und Orthodoxie’; Harald Schultze, ‘Orthodoxie und Selbstbehauptung’.

<sup>133</sup> J.A. Cramer, D.tr. *Het Christendom boven de rede [Christendom above reason]* (1772); I have not been able to trace the German original. Accusing him of devious methods, Cramer refuted Spalding’s *Gedanken über den Wert der Gefühle im Christentum* (1761); D.tr. *De Christen, in ernstige overweeging van de waarde der inwendige bevinding in het Christendom* (1771). The preface to Spalding’s book was written by the Lutheran minister Johan Diederich Deiman, reputedly the first Dutch *Neologe*; like Spalding, he contended that conversion is not attended upon by any direct divine influence, but is the result of divine truth being mediated through the Word of God and influencing human reason. Note that Spalding corresponded with the Mennonite Hulshoff; cf. ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by Allard Hulshoff, dd. 1–7–1774.

from being corrupted by the writings of the new reformers. The best antidote against the Germans, proposed the author, was the establishment of apologetic societies that called on the secular authorities to outlaw books criticizing public doctrine in an ‘uncivilized’ manner. Sponsored by the government, such societies were to foster the education of the youth, publish refutations of foreign writings that were as yet untranslated, draw up a ‘characterology’ of all foreign and domestic new reformers, and oppose them by issuing travel accounts, histories, poems, novels, fables, plays, and satires in defence of the Reformed religion.<sup>134</sup>

Such attempts to preserve the public authority of orthodoxy by using the means and methods of polite communication were bound to fail. For as we shall see in the following sections, the main principle underlying the polite religious public was the candid expression of inwardly appropriated, simple truths; and the problem for the traditional defenders of the confessionalism was that, in the wake of the German new reformers, opinion makers now tended to insist that orthodox truths were neither simple nor conducive to eliciting candid support.

### 6.3 THE HISTORICAL IMPERATIVE

For later eighteenth-century Dutchmen, truths, whether simple or not, had to be able to withstand a measure of criticism. One of the major contributions of eighteenth-century German scholarship concerned the critical approach to historical sources. This section will consider the two most important aspects of this new historical approach—biblical criticism and ‘impartial’ church history—and their bearing on the Dutch toleration debate. We shall focus in particular on the reception of writings by two significant German scholars, Michaelis and Mosheim, and touch as we go along on several related subjects, including accommodation theory and eighteenth-century changes in the use of the word ‘heresy’.

The first aspect related to the new German historical approach concerns the rise of criticism. Dutch philology and language studies

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<sup>134</sup> [D.C. van Voorst], *Uitlegkundig en godgeleerd magazyn* (1789); review in *VB* 1790-i, 49–58.

had long enjoyed an excellent reputation in Germany and England. The Dutch had done pioneering work in New Testament Greek and the oriental languages, particularly Hebrew and Arabic, and were famous throughout Europe.<sup>135</sup> The Leiden professor Albert Schultens (1686–1750), for instance, had been one of the most famous Arabists of his time, and was recognized as a trailblazer even by the best of German scholars. However, by the second half of the century, the latter had begun to surpass the Dutch in linguistics, philology, exegesis, and biblical criticism in general. Soon enough the Dutch had a high opinion of German scholarship; but again, the regard for foreign learning was ambivalent. It was beyond dispute that many Germans and some Englishmen maintained high standards of scholarship. Sometimes, however, the new philologists and exegetes seemed somewhat carried away with their own critical work. They searched for biblical evidence of traditional doctrines, and claimed not to have been able to find it.

One of the great Bible scholars of the century, and one of the founding fathers of critical Bible studies, was the Göttingen orientalist Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791).<sup>136</sup> His vast *Mosaïsches Recht* (1770–1775), which sought to contextualize Mosaic Law by relating it to the politics, morals, geography, religion, commerce and customs of its time, was well received. Such books, observed the reviewers, could only be written when scholars were free to inquire into the Scriptures, and evidently, the Germans were ahead of the Dutch in this respect.<sup>137</sup> The translator of *Mosaïsches Recht* was Augustus Sterk (1748–1815), a Lutheran minister who had studied at Halle under Semler, and was later accused of denying the Trinity. Nevertheless, Michaelis himself was comparatively conservative and his writings tended to mediate between Reason and Revelation. He did not deny that Mosaic law had been divinely inspired, but claimed that inspiration had come about indirectly. Moses had been inspired by God to derive his rules and regulations from Egypt.<sup>138</sup> Orthodox reviews of his writings were often quite positive, in spite of Michaelis' irreverent comparison of Calvinist predestination with Islamic fatalism

<sup>135</sup> Gerretzen, *Schola Hemsterhusiana*; Nat, *De studie van de Oostersche talen in Nederland*.

<sup>136</sup> Smend, 'Johann David Michaelis.'

<sup>137</sup> D.tr. J.D. Michaelis, *Mozaisch recht of de ziel der wetten van Mozes* (1772–1776); VL 1771-i, 319. On the intellectual background, cf. Seifert, 'Staatenkunde'.

<sup>138</sup> Löwenbrück, 'Johann David Michaelis' Verdienst'.

in his prize-winning essay for the Berlin Academy.<sup>139</sup> Michaelis observed that his own *Gedanken über die Lehre der heiligen Schrift von Sünde und Genugthuung, als eine der Vernunft gemässe Lehre*, first published in 1748, was considered more orthodox when it was issued again in 1779. The fact that it was regarded as a useful antidote against Eberhard, Bahrdt and Steinbart illustrates Michaelis' essential conservatism.<sup>140</sup>

No less important than *Mosaïsches Recht* was the impressive *Deutsche Übersetzung des Alten Testaments mit Anmerkungen für Ungelehrte* (1769–1785). All thirteen volumes were published in Dutch from 1776 onwards.<sup>141</sup> The reviewers gave Michaelis all due merit for creating the field of Bible studies in Germany, and for combining academic freedom with scholarship. By the 1790s, they still considered his translation useful, but also noted that now a native star had risen in critical studies. This was IJsbrand van Hamelsveld, who furnished the Dutch public with a complete translation of the Bible between 1789 and 1796, including a commentary for the unschooled.<sup>142</sup> Earlier Van Hamelsveld had basked in Michaelis' glory as the Dutch translator of the *Deutsche Übersetzung*. The work had been begun, however, by Willem Emery de Perponcher (1741–1819), a nobleman and magistrate at Utrecht with a penchant for evangelical piety.<sup>143</sup> The fact that De Perponcher translated the first volumes of the *Deutsche Übersetzung* was one reason for its favourable reception among the orthodox. Men like De Perponcher—who combined political authority with learning and devotion—were relatively rare and much cherished. The reviewers energetically agreed with De Perponcher's critical annotations. Michaelis was an excellent linguist, but much too free in his exegesis, a man of sound judgement, but an addict to questionable novelties.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>139</sup> NB 1774-i, I, 298–304, with a comment on Michaelis, *Beantwortung der Frage von dem Einfluss der Meinungen in die Sprache und der Sprache in die Meinungen* (1759); D.tr. *Prisverhandeling over den wederkeerigen invloed van de aangenomen begrippen onder een volk op de nationaale taal* (1771), tr. by C. van Engelen.

<sup>140</sup> D.tr. J.D. Michaelis, *De overeenstemming van de H. Schrift met de gezonde reden* (1785); NB 1786-i, 261–271; tr. by the Lutheran divine J.H. Fortmeijer, who had studied at Göttingen.

<sup>141</sup> D.tr. J.D. Michaelis, *Nieuwe overzetting des O.T. met aanmerkingen voor ongeleerden* (1776–1798).

<sup>142</sup> VL 1795-i, 45–48.

<sup>143</sup> Bulhof, *Ma patrie et au ciel*.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. NB 1785-i, 342–354, 389–400. The NB did state politely that it did not agree with De Perponcher on everything. See also NB 1775-i, 353–365, 473–486. Note that De Perponcher believed in the restitution of all things.

Another work of renown by Michaelis, the *Einleitung in die göttlichen Schriften des Neuen Bundes* (1750), translated under the supervision of Rütz, was similarly considered an extremely erudite study.<sup>145</sup> Rütz included a preface in which he pleaded for a critical approach to biblical literature—for what in eighteenth-century Dutch was known as *oordeelkunde* before the German term *Kritik* came into fashion.<sup>146</sup> The philologist, the exegete and the dogmatist, argued Rütz, should follow the critic, for it is he who provides the groundwork. It is, in other words, the critic rather than the dogmatist who establishes the true fundamentals of faith. Hence, the Christian religion (the information provided by the critic) ought to be distinguished from the various theological systems (the work of dogmatists). The latter may be full of errors; and they are frequently the reason why youthful minds reject the Christian religion altogether, and lapse into deism. Rütz's ideas found support with an orthodox reviewer, who observed that the most experienced Reformed theologians had no problem at all in subjecting the Calvinist system to the strictest criticism. Why, then, is criticism so unpopular among the Reformed? The reviewer believed that many divines had been put off by the flagrant misuse of biblical criticism in Germany, which was being flooded by dubious 'new translations' and 'critical examinations'. He hoped that criticism would make more headway in the Netherlands, on condition that established scholars rather than 'arbitrary and dissolute Critics' practised it.<sup>147</sup>

Then there was Michaelis' 24-volume *Orientalische und exegetische Bibliothek* (1771–1780), translated in five volumes of selected treatises. Unanimously regarded as an excellent series, as a learned periodical it catered *eo ipso* to ecumenical scholarship.<sup>148</sup> And in this respect, too, eighteenth-century confessional divines faced a double-edged sword. They themselves were often highly qualified scholars committed to learning, but the distressing thing was that modern philology and historical criticism did not halt at what for centuries had

<sup>145</sup> D.tr. J.D. Michaelis, *Inleiding in de godlijke schriften van het Nieuwe Verbond* (1778–1780).

<sup>146</sup> An early, moderate defence of biblical criticism by an academic divine is P. Chevallier, *De literis humanioribus, optimo religionis Christianae praesidio* (1764).

<sup>147</sup> *NB* 1778-i, 561–570; *NB* 1779-i, 337–343.

<sup>148</sup> *NB* 1782-i, 263–265; D.tr. J.D. Michaelis, *Oostersche en uitlegkundige bibliotheek* (1780–1785). Cf. also the address *De theologo erudito* (1790), by Jona Willem te Water (1740–1822), professor of church history at Leiden; recommended in *VB* 1790-i, 366–371, for its 'noble impartiality' in praising learned theologians from *all* denominations.



been recognized as traditionally Christian. A good example of the changes in theological practice is an inaugural address by Carolus Segaar (1724–1803), a moderately orthodox theology professor at Utrecht, concerning Hugo Grotius as an exegete.<sup>149</sup> Segaar argued, in effect, that a follower of Calvin had to be ecumenical in his scholarship. Students should not shrink from making use of Lutherans (ranging from Melanchthon and Gerhard to Ernesti and Michaelis), Arminians (Episcopus, Van Limborch and Le Clerc), and even Roman Catholics. Above all, Segaar praised Grotius' literal interpretation of the New Testament. Times, indeed, had changed. Moreover, with the progress of ecumenical learning, the fire of Cocceian-style divinity was finally extinguished. Michaelis himself had tried to make the best of 'typical theology' in his *Entwurf der typischen Gottesgelahrtheit* (1753), but it was clear that the heyday of Cocceian theology was over.<sup>150</sup> This was not widely lamented, however. Van Hamelsveld, the best popularizer of moderate *oordeelkunde*, was a Cocceian, but no longer recognizably so; he was primarily a careful, ecumenical critic.

As the new reformers appeared on the scene, matters got worse. Michaelis' work was enhanced by Johann Gottfried Eichhorn (1752–1827), theology professor at Jena. Van Hamelsveld translated his *Historisch-kritische Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (1780–1783), in which Eichhorn developed Jean Astruc's hypothesis concerning the authorship of the Pentateuch. It was difficult not to qualify the work as 'useful', since Eichhorn defended the authenticity of the Old Testament; on the other hand, this German scholar also combined erudition with frighteningly bold suppositions.<sup>151</sup> One controversial Dutch supporter of Eichhorn was Hendrik Albert Schultens (1749–1793), the third in the dynasty of renowned Leiden academics, and much less reticent than his father Jan Jacob in applying critical methods to the Old Testament. He translated Eichhorn's biography of Michaelis.<sup>152</sup>

<sup>149</sup> C. Segaar, *De Hugone Grotio, illustri humanorum et divinatorum, Novi Foederis, scriptorum interprete* (1785).

<sup>150</sup> D.tr. J.D. Michaelis, *Ontwerp der voorbeeldige godgeleerdheid* (1773). Cf. also Friedrich Wilhelm Mascho († 1784), a school director from Hamburg, with *Unterricht von den biblischen Tropen und Figuren* (1774); D.tr. *Onderweys in den oneigentlyken en figuurlyken spreekstyl der Heilige Schrift* (1780); the Dutch translator supported Mascho's criticism of Dutch theology.

<sup>151</sup> D.tr. J.G. Eichhorn, *Inleiding in het Oude Testament* (1784, 1789); NB 1785-i, 425–430; NB 1786-i, 17–25. Astruc argued that Moses had used 12 different sources in writing Genesis.

<sup>152</sup> J.G. Eichhorn, *Einige Bemerkungen über seinen literarischen Character* (1791); D.tr. *Aanmerkingen over de letterkundige verdiensten van Johan David Michaelis* (1791).

Another outstanding German orientalist was Johann Ernst Faber (1745–1774), professor at Jena, who translated and annotated the first volume of the *Observations on divers passages of Scripture* (1764) by the English nonconformist Thomas Harmer (1714–1788). Faber's annotations, said one angry critic, were highly immoderate; he was clearly 'a heckler and a profligate Tolerant.'<sup>153</sup> This was almost as bad as the way orthodox reviewers treated Bahrtdt. The *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* mentioned an obscure periodical called the *Foreign Library*, which had had the gall to publish an excerpt from Johann H. von Gerstenberg's *Eden, das ist Betrachtungen über das Paradies* (1772), edited by Bahrtdt and later translated into Dutch (1783).<sup>154</sup> Greater respect was paid to Christian Gottlieb Kühnöl (1768–1841), a typical exponent of the German philological school who had studied at Leipzig under Ernesti, and who would be highly valued in the early nineteenth-century Netherlands as an outstanding classicist. Yet he, too, tended to downgrade miracles to natural events.<sup>155</sup> As for the *enfant terrible* of academic biblical criticism, Johann Salomo Semler (1725–1791): his writings did not appear in Dutch in the eighteenth century.<sup>156</sup> This is not to say that he was unknown. Van Goens wrote to Van der Marck on Semler, 'for whose person and rare erudition I have the greatest reverence, but who, as you know, many hold as a highly suspicious and dangerous man, above all in this country.'<sup>157</sup>

Not all the new learning came from Germany, of course, although it is telling that even Benjamin Kennicott's enterprise—collecting variants of Masoretic texts—was brought to the broader Dutch public via a German account of his activities.<sup>158</sup> Poetry was another field

<sup>153</sup> T. Harmer, *Beobachtungen über den Orient* (1772); D.tr. *Waarneemingen over het Oosten* (1774); *NB* 1775-i, 206–214.

<sup>154</sup> D.tr. [C.F. Bahrtdt = J.H. von Gerstenberg], *Betragtingen over het parady's* (1783). *Uytlandsche Bibliotheek* (1773 or 1774); *NB* 1774/II-i, 22n–23n. The translator was a certain 'J.H.M.', probably a synonym for J.H. Munnikhuizen.

<sup>155</sup> [C.G. Kühnöl], *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volks (. . .) für denkende Leser der Bibel* (1791); D.tr. *Geschiedenis des Joodschen volks* (1792). The orthodox *Boekbeschouwer* I (1793), 11–18, warned against the book.

<sup>156</sup> Semler was, however, explicitly refuted by a theology student, A. van Harencarspel: *Betoog en verdediging van de agtbaarheid der geschiedkundige boeken des Ouden Testaments* [*Argument and defence of the respectability of the historical books of the Old Testament*] (1782).

<sup>157</sup> ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by R.M. van Goens, Utrecht, dd. 16–1–1778. The *Algemeene bibliotheek* included short announcements concerning Semler's writings. Schultens was informed about Semler's theological doings by Gottlob Christian Storr (1746–1805), a relatively orthodox Lutheran professor at Tübingen who distanced himself from both Semler and Kant; the *Bibliotheca Schultensiana* mentions Semler's *Abhandlung über die rechtmäßige Freiheit der academischen theologischen Lehrart* (1771).

<sup>158</sup> Cf. *NB* 1779-ii, 122–135, 149–165 (an account of Kennicott's work translated

of biblical scholarship that had recently come into fashion, and to which the English had contributed much. Yet it was the Göttingen edition of Robert Lowth's *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum praelectiones academiae* (1758), annotated by Michaelis, which was most widely used in the Netherlands. Johann Gottfried Herder's *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie* (1782–83) was well-received, but not by everyone.<sup>159</sup> Translated by the Mennonite Cornelis van Engelen at the instigation of Hendrik Schultens, it provoked an orthodox reviewer to warn against the new vogue of studying ancient poems. This light-hearted dabbling in scriptural poetry tended to obscure the religious truths contained in them, or at least to reduce their authority. Herder's dialogue on the paradisaical state was a case in point. Surely the learned Professor Schultens did not support its Pelagian drift, questioned the reviewer (who, of course, knew better). God forbid that 'the fundamental truths of Christendom are not versified into oblivion!'<sup>160</sup>

Not everyone objected to the new criticism. One writer claimed that the new methods were not new at all; Erasmus, Grotius, Le Clerc, Wettstein, Venema and other Dutch scholars had already suggested the things Michaelis and Eichhorn were now claiming. What had changed, continued the same writer, was the context. Scholarship had become free and it had become public. In the past, scholars had been unable to announce openly which rules they applied in their exegetical work, and they had had to remain content with camouflage and intimations. Stinstra, persecuted in the past for Socinianism, in later years still avoided making public his interpretation of 2 Sam 23:6–7, a passage which in his view had nothing to do with Christ. Fortunately, said the commentator, such strategies have now become superfluous.<sup>161</sup> The author of a dialogue between 'Sincerus and Pius' similarly stressed the link between liberty and learning. Sincerity, he contended, implied the liberty to criticize. If religious faith were to be sincere, it had to be based on evidence afforded by criticism. The Scriptures had to be studied impartially and in the spirit of free inquiry. Moreover, it was important to keep in mind Herder's rule that 'the Bible is read best when

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from the German). The reception of scholars like J.J. Griesbach was basically a nineteenth-century affair.

<sup>159</sup> D.tr. J.G. Herder, *Samenspraaken over de Hebreeuwse poëzy* [*Dialogues on Hebrew poetry*; later the German title was translated literally] (1784).

<sup>160</sup> *NB* 1785-i, 330–342; *NB* 1788-i, 199–205.

<sup>161</sup> *De Recensent III* (1792), 488–511.

it is read humanly'. People had to concern themselves with the practical consequences of scriptural tenets, rather than worry about the metaphysical intricacies they had derived in their youth from peculiar theological handbooks. Needed now was a concise and simple synopsis based on the moral teachings of Jesus.<sup>162</sup> In short, it was scarcely possible to advance sincerity and piety without also advancing critical learning. Critical scholarship was the intellectual expression of the polite religious public, and its intrusion into the theological faculties was inevitable.<sup>163</sup>

Thus, pondered the more critical lights, if Christ's teachings were really all that reasonable and simple, why did the Bible refer to such palpable violations of common sense as, for example, the physical proximity of devils and evil spirits? The theory that succeeded in rocking even hardened critics was the idea of accommodation—not because it was new, but because it now began to be taught in brazen openness. As far as the Dutch were concerned, accommodation theory went back to Balthasar Bekker, who applied it with rigour to traditional pneumatology. As we saw, by the time accommodation theory began to function as a permanent element—albeit a controversial one—in public theological discourse, the direct cause was not *The world bewitched* but contemporary, especially German, divinity. The more popular cases for supporters of accommodation theory included the Gospel accounts of the temptation of Christ and the herd of possessed swine. As early as the 1750s, a Lutheran divine whose intellectual affiliations were evidently more German than Dutch was sharply criticized by orthodox laymen in his congregation for suggesting that the devil was a psychological entity rather than a real one.<sup>164</sup> In 1783, Rütz categorically rejected the orthodox view that demons were able to, and did, possess people physically and incite them to perform sinful deeds. There was no scriptural basis for a supposition that had been derived from heathens and to which Jesus referred only in order to accommodate his teachings to the limited understanding of his Jewish contemporaries. All we can say on the basis of the Bible is that there is a Satan who influences people

<sup>162</sup> *VB* 1794-ii, 390–397.

<sup>163</sup> Much praised in periodicals, on account of the modest and irenic tone, was Jodocus Heringa Ezn's 'Essay on the necessary use and contemporary misuse of criticism in the treatment of the Holy Scriptures', in: *PGVCG* (1793); cf. *VL* 1795-i, 89–96.

<sup>164</sup> This was Statius Muller; see section 7.3 below.

morally rather than immediately. Possessed people are sick; they require a physician, not an exorcist.<sup>165</sup> Again, German theologians were not the only demons. *An essay on the demoniacs* (1775) by Hugh Farmer (1714–1787), a nonconformist English minister, was translated into Dutch in 1777, and duly refuted.<sup>166</sup> A contemporary commentator mentioned Semler, Georg F. Meier, Peter Villaume, and Bekker (in *German* translation), as the best accommodation theorists apart from Farmer.<sup>167</sup>

Dutch divines caught the contagion. In 1789, the *Haagsch Genootschap* felt obliged to organize an essay competition on the issue. The traditional view was ostensibly defended by Jodocus Heringa (1765–1840; his name was usually suffixed with ‘Eliza’s zoon’), who would embark on a distinguished career as professor of theology at Utrecht. Heringa’s position was somewhat equivocal, typifying a younger generation of established divines who were prepared to look critically at certain doctrines on the basis of *oordeelkunde*. Refuting Bahrtdt, Steinbart, Semler, and Teller, Heringa contended that biblical tales of the devil could not be simply reduced to psychological states. At the same time, he thought that at least some New Testament accounts were the result of accommodation to erroneous Jewish beliefs.<sup>168</sup> The most ardent supporter of German criticism was the Remonstrant Paulus van Hemert. His spectacular address *De prudentii Christi, apostolorum,*

<sup>165</sup> F.G.C. Rütz, *Leerreden over Luc. XI. 14–28* [Sermon on (. . .)] (1783); cf. *NB* 1783-i, 464–469. In all, Rütz published seven sermons on the topic, of which the review periodicals kept a close track. He subsequently wrote a preface and a commentary to writings on New Testament demons by Theodor G. Timmermann (1727–1792), a medical professor at Rinteln: *Diatribē antiquario-medica de demoniacis Evangeliorum* (1786); D.tr. *Oudheid- en geneeskundige verhandeling over de demonische menschen* (1789), tr. by Johan Frederik Lentz, a Lutheran candidate for the ministry who had studied at Göttingen but was rejected by the Amsterdam Consistory in 1781 because he held tenets contradicting the Lutheran confession. Cf. also F.G.C. Rütz, *Daemonologische fragmenten* [Demonological fragments] (1789). Anton Dereser, 1757–1827, a Catholic professor of oriental languages at Bonn, wrote (using the pseudonym Thaddäus a S. Adamo), *Die Versuchungsgeschichte Jesu* (1789); D.tr. *Verklaaring van de geschiedenis der verzoeking van Christus*, Utrecht, Amsterdam 1791; tr. by a ‘Protestant’ pleased with the progress of ‘nobler’ religious notions among Roman Catholics.

<sup>166</sup> D.tr. H. Farmer, *Verhandeling over de demonische bezetenen in het Nieuwe Verbond* (1777); C. van den Broek, *Verhandeling (. . .) over de demonische bezetenen in het Nieuwe Verbond, opgehelderd en verdedigd* (1782). Cornelis van den Broek (1734–1793) was a member of a clerical society at Rotterdam called ‘Diversity and Concord’. Cf. also the rationalist *Case of the demoniacs* (1748) by Nathaniel Lardner (1684–1768); D.tr. *Vier redevoeringen over de bezeetenen* (1758), tr. by C. Westerbaen.

<sup>167</sup> W. Goede in: Starck, *Vrijmoedige bedenkingen over het Christendom*, II, 72–74.

<sup>168</sup> Buisman, ‘Bekkers wraak’, 103–105; on the ‘Haagsch Genootschap’, see below.

*atque evangelistarum consilio, sermones sua ac scripta, ad captum atque intellectum vulgi, quantum illud fieri potuit, accommodantium* (1791) was soon translated into Dutch and even German. According to Van Hemert, Jesus had accommodated himself to popular error to get his message through. Now, however, man was sufficiently civilized to separate simple fundamentals from obsolete ornaments.<sup>169</sup> Less radical divines remained unconvinced.<sup>170</sup> It is obvious, said one, that ‘under the pretext of supporting Exegetical studies, which in themselves are good and necessary, that under this pretext people advance a loose, arbitrary and often feeble exegesis, in which the Hebrew or Greek text is made to say whatever they think it should say, according to their favoured system.’<sup>171</sup>

We now come to a second aspect related to the new German historical approach, the rise of critical church history. Like the Bible itself, the history of the Christian church too was subject to criticism. Again, the enterprise was ecumenical, and the general result a vindication of heresy. Three factors contributed to invalidating the word ‘heresy’ itself as a moral disqualification used in defence of the confessional public sphere. In the first place, if citizens were now defined primarily in terms of polite nationhood—*Christian* nationhood—it was no longer very productive to regard compatriots as sinful heretics. The extent to which citizens contributed to the common good, or demonstrated ‘love for the Fatherland’ (*vaderlandsliefde*), had become the main standard of tolerability. An important symptom of change was the way in which the Dutch began to reevaluate the heretic’s place in history. One forum was the 10-volume *Biography of some eminent men and women, mostly Dutch* (1774–1783), written, among others, by the aged Johannes Stinstra and his fellow Mennonite Simon Stijl.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>169</sup> The German translation appeared in 1797. Van Hemert later won the gold medal with an essay on accommodation theory, awarded by Teyler’s Theological Society; *Verhandeligen TGG* XII.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. the response to the *Proeve eener beredeneerde verklaringe der geschiedenisse van ’s Heilands verzoekingen in de woestijne* [*Attempt at a reasoned explanation of the history of the Saviour’s temptations in the wilderness*] (1790), by the Dutch Mennonite J.H. Floh, in *VB* 1792-i, 254–258.

<sup>171</sup> *Boekbeschouwer* I (1793), 4–5. Cf. also H. van Herwerden, *’s Heilands verzoekingen in de woestijne* [*The Saviour’s temptations in the wilderness*] (1786). J.C. Lavater, *Predigten über die Versuchung Christi in der Wüste* (1788); *D.tr. Leerredenen over de verzoeking van Christus* [c. 1794], tr. by the Reformed minister Martin Coenen (1757–1842).

<sup>172</sup> *Levensbeschrijving van enige voornaame meest Nederlandsche mannen en vrouwen* (1774–1783); a critical review in *NB* 1775-i, 365–369. A list of the biographies in Haitsma Mulier and Van der Lem, *Repertorium van geschiedschrijvers in Nederland*, 245–247.

Their choice of ‘eminent men and women’ is interesting in itself. Included are biographies of unconventional people like the eccentric mystic David Joris and the radical Anabaptist Jan van Leiden. Calvin is not dragged through the mire, but not praised for his leniency either; Arminius is treated much more favourably. Similarly, Episcopius is portrayed more sympathetically than either Voet or Cocceius. Heretics subject to ‘impartial’ reconsideration were Faustus Socinus, Bekker, and Bayle. The entries for Coornhert and Boerhaave gave the writers cause to denounce the *odium theologicum* as a specifically Calvinist vice. Histories of heretics do not seem to have been particularly popular in the Netherlands, although Gottfried Arnold’s *Unparteiische Kirchen- und Ketzergeschichte* (1700–1715) was well-known; it was even published in Dutch in an expensive folio edition.<sup>173</sup> A *History of heretics* did appear in 1755, an account of various heresies in alphabetical order.<sup>174</sup>

The second factor leading to the disappearance of heresy as an expression of theological opprobrium was terminological. James Foster’s approach to ‘heresy’ was characteristic of Protestant dissent.<sup>175</sup> Foster noted that in the New Testament the word ‘heresy’ ‘signifies no more than a *sect* or *party* in religion’; a heretic is simply someone who heads a particular religious sect or chooses to join one. The New Testament employs the negative sense of the term particularly to denote someone who knowingly and wilfully propagates a false doctrine for the sake of temporal benefit. We should restrict our use of the term ‘heretic’ to such insincere and depraved people. The people ‘who come *nearest* the character of the old heretics are *violent party-men*, who confine Christianity to their own faction, and excommunicate all that take the liberty to differ from them (. . .)’.<sup>176</sup> In the Dutch context, this would mean that the true heretics were the orthodox Calvinist clergymen who presided over the confessional public sphere.<sup>177</sup> Even

<sup>173</sup> D.tr. G. Arnold, *Historie der kerken en ketteren* (1701–1729). Cf. also Arnold’s *Die erste Liebe. Das ist: Wahre Abbildung der ersten Christen*; D.tr. *Waare afbeelding der eerste Christenen* (1700–1701); translated by Willem Séwel.

<sup>174</sup> *Historie der ketteren* (1755), compiled by ‘J.A.D.’ on the basis of other authors; Haitsma Mulier and Van der Lem, *Repertorium van geschiedschrijvers in Nederland*, 188.

<sup>175</sup> J. Foster, *Sermons on the following subjects (. . .)* (1732) (the sermon on heresy is on 283–309); D.tr. *Zestien predikaetsien over zeer gewichtige stoffen* (1737). Foster had had a lengthy debate with the High Church Anglican Henry Stebbing (1687–1763) on the meaning of Titus 3:10.

<sup>176</sup> Quoted in Van Eijnatten, *Mutua Christianorum tolerantia*, 64–72.

<sup>177</sup> For such exegeses of Titus 3:10, see *De Philosoph II* (1767), 209–216; *De*

Calvinist clergymen began to use the term in this sense. Isaac de la Fontaine (1711–1785), a Reformed minister, made the point in his annotations to J.H. Formey's *Abrégé de l'histoire ecclésiastique* (1763).<sup>178</sup> Titus 3:10, said De la Fontaine, merely refers to people who entertain gross errors with the aim of gathering followers and becoming leaders of particular sects or parties. Paul does not recommend that such people be excommunicated, but merely that they be shunned. As the term 'heresy' was neutralized, so too was its complement, 'orthodoxy'. While some regarded orthodoxy as a synonym for blind subservience to confessions,<sup>179</sup> less intemperate commentators tended to regard it as a heresy in the sense of a sect. Even the Reformed theologian Samuel Manger argued in his address *De festo Orthodoxiae, a Graecis Christianis celebrato* (1786) that the word 'orthodox' was unbiblical and that it had all too often been used as an excuse for the lamentable reception of disputable tenets by obtuse persons.

The third factor leading to the disappearance of 'heresy' as a moral category, apart from changes in public discourse and terminology, was historiographical. The pursuit of 'impartial' history and an emphasis on original sources had been held up as standards by the best Dutch historian of the eighteenth century, the Collegiant Jan Wagenaar.<sup>180</sup> However, the greatest impulse to Dutch church history was given by Johann Lorenz Mosheim (1694–1755), since 1747 chancellor of the Georg-August Universität at Göttingen. Mosheim inaugurated the theological version of German 'pragmatic' history, which entailed an objective and critical analysis of original sources. Mosheim's unimpeachable treatment of source material did justice to 'Sekten' and 'Parteien' who had hitherto been dealt with inconsiderately or simply disregarded. His avoidance of doctrinal presuppositions gave his historical work the semblance of being impartial or *unpartheiisch*, while his societal definition of the church necessarily included heretics as well as the various orthodoxies. Mosheim shunned the influence of philosophy in religious matters, since in his view this had always

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*Godsdienstvriend*, V (1793), 185–192. The view became the standard one in the eighteenth century; for an earlier example, see e.g. Van Avenhorn, *De onderlinge Christelyke verdraagzaamheit*, 16–17.

<sup>178</sup> *Kort begrip der kerkelyke historie* (1778), tr. by I. de la Fontaine; review in *Algemeene Bibliotheek* II (1778), 356–370.

<sup>179</sup> *De Denker* I (1764), 361–368; the 'orthodox' were also supposed to be ignorant of excellent moral writers like Turretini, Werenfels, and Tillotson.

<sup>180</sup> Wessels, *Bron, waarheid en de verandering der tijden*, 197–208.



been the principal cause of sectarianism and dissension. All this enabled him to write objective and critical studies without compromising his orthodoxy. Church historians, he argued, had to at least attempt to understand sects and heresies, which were unavoidably intertwined with the history of mainstream Christianity. Impartiality, the hallmark of Mosheim's pragmatic approach, made allowances for the inconsequentiality and harmlessness of certain historical phenomena and the religious claims connected with them, without implying recognition of their validity or truth.<sup>181</sup>

No wonder, then, that throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century Dutch dissenters regaled Mosheim with words of praise and honour. As we have seen, Mosheim had upset the Calvinist clergy in the 1720s with his *De auctoritate Concilii Dordraceni*. Moreover, in 1729 the translation appeared of Mosheim's *Historia Michaelis Serveti* (1727).<sup>182</sup> Ostensibly written by a young German nobleman, the book reflected Mosheim's interest in 'impartial' church history (Servet's biography, as the title page claims, is 'derived from virtually all writers who ever wrote on, for or against him'). Mosheim made use of Michel de la Roche's findings in the Genevan city archives. The irascible Huguenot La Chapelle later refuted La Roche's and Mosheim's handling of Servet in a series of hostile but famous articles in the *Bibliothèque raisonnée* of 1728. Their account of Calvin was the result of 'malice noire' and 'aigre intolerance dans l'animosité personnelle que certaines gens font paroître contre cet Illustre Reformateur'.<sup>183</sup> The Dutch translator hastened to point out that his intention in translating the book—at the publisher's request, he claimed—had nothing to do with resentment against the Reformed. However, he took great pains to rebut the accusations against Mosheim in the

<sup>181</sup> On Mosheim's historical writing, see Schneider, 'Zum Sektenproblem der Kirchengeschichte'.

<sup>182</sup> D.tr. J.L. Mosheim [H. von Allwoerden], *Historie van Michael Servetus* (1729). Prior to Mosheim, the dissenting poet Joachim Oudaan had popularized Servet's fate. Oudaan's *Toneel-poëzy* (1712), contains the fifth act of a tragedy called 'Servetus' (1655), a dialogue between Vatikanus (who represents Calvin and ecclesiastical tyranny) and Blandrata (an Italian anti-Trinitarian).

<sup>183</sup> *Bibliothèque raisonnée*, 1728, I-ii, 366–400 (review of the Latin edition of Mosheim's book) and 1729, II-i, 88–176 (further comments as well as a letter of complaint written by Mosheim). La Chapelle's review was well-known in the eighteenth century; it is still referred to in Van der Marck's *Lectiones academicae* II-i (1772), 74. Allwoerden/Mosheim was refuted as late as *NB* 1776-i, 501–514. On the discussion, Thomas, 'Michel de La Roche', 152–153, 167–169. La Roche had defended Servet extensively in his *Memoirs of Literature* in the early 1710s.

*Bibliothèque Raisonnée*.<sup>184</sup> The translator revealed his identity by claiming that he was engaged in writing *Belga graecissans, sive convenientia linguae Graecae & Belgicae*, a book on the applicability of Greek metre to the Dutch language.<sup>185</sup> Mosheim's translator was, then, the polymath Wilhelm Otto Reitz (1702–1768), a teacher of German descent at the Latin school in Rotterdam, who wrote learned books and articles on classical scholarship, law and mathematics.

It took about 15 years before Mosheim's *magnum opus*, the *Institutionum historiae ecclesiasticae antiquae et recentioris* (1755), was translated; but Dutch divines had been using the Latin version as soon as it appeared in Germany. Unfortunately, we do not know who translated the eleven Dutch volumes.<sup>186</sup> The translator must have been versatile in English as well as Latin since he made extensive use of the annotations added to the English translation (1765) by the Ulsterman Archibald Maclaine (1722–1804). The latter (a brother of James Maclaine, the 'gentleman highwayman' hanged at Tyburn in 1750) was a learned pastor at the English Presbyterian Church in The Hague, and one-time tutor of the young prince of Orange. His theological leanings are perhaps best illustrated by his friendship with the Scottish diarist James Boswell, who was not much given to orthodoxy, and by the fact that the Amsterdam magistracy reprimanded a periodical for reviewing one of Maclaine's works.<sup>187</sup> Maclaine had been advised by William Warburton to attach supplements, annotations and chronological tables to his translation. The learned Dutch translator claimed to correspond with Maclaine; we know that he also rendered portions of Mosheim's *De rebus Christianorum ante Constantinum Magnum commentarii* (1753) and *Institutiones historiae Christianae maiores* (1739) into Dutch.<sup>188</sup> He annotated these with learned references, many of which referred to Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica*. The Dutch expert on, and translator of, Eusebius was the Remonstrant Van der Meersch, who had already applied Mosheim's concept of impartial *Ketzergeschichte* in his own work.<sup>189</sup> Given his proficiency in

<sup>184</sup> Mosheim [Allwoerden], *Historie van Michael Servetus*, 'Voorbericht', VIII–XIV; the translator appealed to La Roche's *Bibliothèque angloise*, 1717, II-i, 76–198.

<sup>185</sup> W.O. Reitz, *Belga graecissans* (1730).

<sup>186</sup> D.tr. J.L. Mosheim, *Oude en Hedendaagsche kerklyke geschiedenissen* (1770–1773).

<sup>187</sup> A. Maclaine, *A series of letters addressed to Soame Jenyns* (1777), in which he argued that the main scriptural tenets had already been suggested by classical philosophers; see *Jongenelen* no. 126.

<sup>188</sup> D.tr. *Noodige ophelderingen der kerklyke geschiedenissen* (1774–1775).

<sup>189</sup> Van der Meersch, preface, in: Eusebius, *Kerkelyke geschiedenissen*.

English and his epistolary friendship with Warburton, Van der Meersch seems to be an excellent candidate for having translated Mosheim's *Institutionum*.<sup>190</sup>

Be that as it may, Mosheim's enormous contribution to church history was widely recognized. The German divine, in the words of one reviewer, had made clear that heresy was not a moral defect, but could be understood rationally. Mosheim had shown that ridiculously unimportant matters, obscure dogmatic terminology, and superstition, ignorance, jealousy, and ambition often caused theological differences. He had revealed that many hallowed synods had in fact combined an irresponsible lack of knowledge with an all too human wickedness. Above all, Mosheim's history was a history of *Christendom*, not a particular sect.<sup>191</sup> But for all his impartiality, Mosheim was not an unambiguous writer in the eyes of confessional divines. Pragmatic history yielded the same advantages and disadvantages as biblical criticism. Based on *oordeelkunde*, Mosheim's method generated both factual knowledge and critical insights. To the orthodox he had proven once and for all that many Roman Catholic dogmas were born of an unhappy wedlock between Platonism and the Bible.<sup>192</sup> On the other hand, given his predilection for *Ketzergeschichte*<sup>193</sup> and his de-confessionalized view of history, traditional historical outlines of the Calvinist heritage beginning with persecuted Waldensians and climaxing at Dort began to resemble a rearguard action by obsolete polemicists. Articles now began to appear in learned periodicals on such problematic individuals as the arch-heretic Simon the Sorcerer, with explicit references to Mosheim, and a particular emphasis on the impartial examination of sources.<sup>194</sup>

Mosheim's method helped to take the edge off anticlericalism and integrate the Dutch toleration debate into the polite public. If Calvinism

<sup>190</sup> Another likely candidate is Cornelis Nozeman, who, like Van der Meersch, translated a work by Warburton.

<sup>191</sup> *VL* 1773-i, 175–181, on vol. VIII (the seventeenth century). Characteristic of the way dissenters valued Mosheim is an essay on apostolic authority by the English prelate John Jortin (1698–1770) in *VL* 1775-ii, 345–356. The anonymous translator had been inspired to render Jortin into Dutch after reading Mosheim's essay on the subject (in *Noodige ophelderingen*, I, 131–138). Jortin, who had little sympathy for subscription, defended freedom of inquiry in his essay.

<sup>192</sup> *NB* 1777-i, 82–92, 260–266; *NB* 1774/I-ii, 224–230.

<sup>193</sup> J.L. Mosheim, *Versuch einer unpartheyischen und gründlichen Ketzergeschichte* (1746); D.tr. *Uitvoerige verhandelingen over voornaame stukken, uit de vroeger en latere historie der ketteren* (1776).

<sup>194</sup> *Hollands Magazijn* I (1750–1751), 19–38, 225–284.

was a heresy in the sense of a sect, it was a sect among many others, neither better nor worse. An essay 'on the intolerance of the Reformers' shows how the reading public was trained to accept Calvinism in what was considered to be its more 'civilized' form. Some writers, above all the great Mosheim, have emphasized the gentle and tolerant disposition of the Reformers, observed the author. If at times they took harsh measures, they did so by careful calculation, in order to further the good cause in difficult situations. This was all very well, but the fact remains that Melancthon agreed with Calvin that Servet ought to be killed. The most ardent supporters of toleration disapprove strongly of the Reformers' actions in this regard. How, then, to interpret their many excesses? We must take into consideration the historical circumstances and the narrow-mindedness of sixteenth-century men. We must contemplate the ways of providence in attaining divine ends through human error and immoderate zeal. And we must bear in mind that undue moderation would have prevented the very success of the Reformation. Certainly, the Reformers can be characterized equitably by their intolerance, in that they habitually condemned anyone who erred. However, they had to combat popular ignorance, papal tyranny and the misuse of power by an ambitious clergy, and they were themselves unable (as many nowadays still are) to distinguish between speculative doctrine and Gospel truth. In short, we should not censure the faults and weaknesses of those who imbibed the prejudice of a barbarous age but otherwise contributed to the cause of mankind. Intolerance is inexcusable in us, who live in a philosophical age, but the Reformers did the best they could.<sup>195</sup> *Ulrich Zwingli's Lebensgeschichte* (1776), by the Swiss theology professor Felix Nüscher, was similarly praised for stressing the 'moderation' of this proto-Calvinist hero at a time when he was still often portrayed as the bloody persecutor of Anabaptists.<sup>196</sup>

<sup>195</sup> VL 1781-ii, 45-53; written by 'G.' Such accounts were influenced (among others) by the German 'pragmatic' church historian Johann Matthias Schröckh (1733-1808). His 'impartial' biography of Luther appeared in Dutch as *Levensbeschrijving van Martinus Lutherus* (1774).

<sup>196</sup> D.tr. F. Nüscher, *Het leven van magister Ulrich Zwingli* [1779]; with a foreword by Nicolaus Barkey sharply criticizing the Reformed Church's censorship policy. Also praised for its moderation was the 'impartial' *Calvins Leben, Meinungen und Thaten* (1794), by the Lutheran divine Johann F.W. Tischer († 1842); D.tr. *Het leven, de gevoelens en de bedrijven van Calvijn* (1796), tr. by the Lutheran G.H. Reiche, and prefaced by a Calvinist, Herman Muntinghe, professor of theology at Harderwijk. See also VB 1796-i, 549-552.

Reassessing the past with new standards made it even more apparent that the present did not live up to them. We may excuse the Reformers for their intolerance, but we cannot excuse ourselves. It was all too clear that much of the hateful present had been inherited directly from a barbarous past. Where Mosheim had shown how Platonism had made lamentable inroads into Christendom, the scientist, Unitarian and political writer Joseph Priestley (1733–1804) wrote extensively on the *History of the corruptions of Christianity* (1782).<sup>197</sup> Refutations of Priestley published by the *Haagsch Genootschap* were resoundingly criticized for their narrow, dogmatic approach.<sup>198</sup> Using Paul of Samosata as his pseudonym, Paulus van Hemert joined the fray with his satirical *Orthodox views of the first Christians concerning the founder of Christendom*.<sup>199</sup> Foreigners, too, contributed to the controversy over Priestley, such as Theophilus Coelestinus Piper (1745–1814), professor of theology at Greifswald, who wrote an essay for the *Haagsch Genootschap* attacking Socinianism.<sup>200</sup> Priestley could be disqualified as a maverick and discarded by serious academic theologians. This was not the case with the Scottish historians, above all the ‘Moderate’ Presbyterian divine William Robertson, whose historiographical work on the progress of civilization was extremely popular among less conservative divines. Among other books, *The history of Scotland* (1759), *The history of the reign of the emperor Charles V* (1769) and *The history of America* (1777) were translated into Dutch, contributing substantially to the growing emphasis on an interiorized Christian politeness, as opposed to the mere outward maintenance of orthodox truth.<sup>201</sup>

Robertson was not in the first place a church historian, however, and church history was mainly the province of the Germans. For

<sup>197</sup> On Priestley see Van Gestel, ‘De Verbasteringen van het Christendom’. Translations of Priestley in the periodicals include *VL* 1784-ii, 611–622, 659–666 (from the *Corruptions*) and *VL* 1789-ii, 49–57 (from the *Lectures on History*); the *NB* 1785-ii, 111–120, defended the honour of the virgin Mary against ‘slanders’ in the *Corruptions*.

<sup>198</sup> *PGVCG* (1787); the contributors were Abdias Velingius, Carolus Segaar and Cornelius Gavel; *De Recensent* II (1790), 171–187.

<sup>199</sup> P. van Hemert [as Samson Carasco], *De rechtzinnige denkwijze der eerste kristenen* (1789); supposedly written to ‘Malchion’ of Antioch to the elders of the Cappadocian church.

<sup>200</sup> Piper was answered by an anonymous *Bedenkingen van eenen vriend der waarheid en goede trouwe, over de verhandeling van T.C. Piper* (s.a.).

<sup>201</sup> D.tr. William Robertson, *Historie der regering van keizer Karel den Vyften* (1772–1773; 1778); *Geschiedenis van America* (1778); *Geschiedenis van Schotland* (1779–1780).

the standards of sophisticated ecclesiastical history-writing, the Dutch looked not across the Channel but to the east, to Mosheim and his successor at Göttingen, Christian W.F. Walch (1726–1784).<sup>202</sup> Gradually the adverse consequences of ‘pragmatic’ history became more and more evident, above all in the writings of the Swiss popularizer Johann Jacob Hess (1741–1828).<sup>203</sup> His boldness in applying ‘immanent’ history to the Gospel itself predictably led to a disregard for specific doctrines. A talented storyteller, Hess was concerned to point out the moral, rather than metaphysical, dimensions of the Christian religion. As far as he was concerned, Jesus was the most excellent human being who had ever lived, and not (as some reviewers observed to their dissatisfaction) primarily the Son of God. Hess illustrated Christ’s moral significance in his immensely popular biblical histories, such as the *Geschichte der drey letzten Lebensjahre Jesu* (1768) and its sequels *Geschichte und Schriften der Apostel Jesu* (1775) and *Ueber die Lehren, Thaten und Schicksale unsers Herrn* (1782), all three books sharply criticized for avoiding or twisting doctrinal issues.<sup>204</sup> The *Biblische Erzählungen für die Jugend* (1772), too, was an excellent work that might have been useful if it had been orthodox.<sup>205</sup> Soon enough the *Gedanken eines sächsischen Predigers* (1774) surfaced in Dutch translation. Probably written by Johann Friedrich Teller (1739–1816), W.A. Teller’s orthodox brother, it contended that Hess was one of those German divines who spread the grossest (Socinian) errors by hiding them in well-told narratives.<sup>206</sup> Hess was one of the pioneers of what in the next century would be known as ‘biblical theology’, and like many of his followers, he had a reputation for putting little faith in theological systems.<sup>207</sup>

Dutch supporters of the newer German theology thus played their

<sup>202</sup> C.W.F. Walch, *Neueste Religionsgeschichte* (1771–1783); D.tr. (partial) *Letterkundige verhandeling over de veranderingen in de studie der kerklijke geschiedenissen* (1772–1774).

<sup>203</sup> Ackva, *Johann Jakob Hess*.

<sup>204</sup> D.tr. J.J. Hess, *Het leven van den grootsten en besten aller menschen Jesus* (1775–1780); *NB* 1776-i, 439–451. *Geschiedenissen en schriften der Apostelen des Heeren* (1779); *NB* 1780-i, 341–345. *Over de leer, daden en lotgevallen onzes Heeren* (1783); *NB* 1783-i, 416–418. Similar criticism was provoked by Hess’s well-known *Von dem Reiche Gottes* (1774); D.tr. *Verhandeling over Gods Koningrijk* (1779). The same applies to Hess’s *Ueber die Volks- und Vaterlandsliebe Jesu* (1794); D.tr. *De volks-liefde en vaderlands-min van Jesus* (1795).

<sup>205</sup> J.J. Hess, *Geschiedverhaalen des Ouden en Nieuwen Testaments* (1778); tr. by J.W. van Haar and prefaced by IJ. van Hamelsveld; *NB* 1778-i, 513–521.

<sup>206</sup> *Aanmerkingen van eenen onbekenden leeraar uit Saxon* (1776).

<sup>207</sup> *NB* 1779-i, 196–197. On ‘biblical theology’, see also section 6.5 below.

trump card in the second half of the eighteenth century. The historical approach led to the rise of biblical criticism and ‘impartial’ historiography, two potent means used intellectually to disqualify orthodox control of the public sphere. It could now be amply demonstrated that orthodox apologists for confessionalism had all along entertained and, worse, forced upon their unwilling compatriots questionable religious notions. What was in order now, believed the critics, was an attack on the legal assumptions underpinning the religious establishment itself. Once again, as we shall see in the following section, the Dutch followed the lead of the German new reformers.

#### 6.4 THE ATTACK ON ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENT

The way in which Germany, especially Prussia, seemed to have overtaken the Republic in the practise of toleration is illustrated by an ‘Historical account of the gradual development of ecclesiastical toleration among Protestants in the Prussian states’, one of the relatively few originally German essays published in the *Vaterlandsche Letter-Oefeningen*. The essay contained a series of excerpts from a well-known book of the period, *Ueber den Religions-Zustand in den preussischen Staaten, seit der Regierung Friedrichs des Grossen (1778–1780)*, by Johann H. Ulrich (1751–1798), a Reformed preacher at Berlin. Ulrich clearly sided with the new reformers, who in his view promoted toleration, not indifference. According to Ulrich, toleration in Prussia was very much a result of Frederick’s benign and beneficent policies.<sup>208</sup> Since Prussia was the origin of much theological renewal, it was only logical that Prussian divines should be among the first to claim that the juridical arguments used to legitimize the confessional public sphere were, at best, morally and intellectually unsatisfying. For critics of the ecclesiastical establishment, the time had come openly to subvert it. This section will examine the predominantly German contribution to the later subscription debates in the Netherlands. As we pass in review a large number of authors, we shall see that German authors were valued partly because they usually held important positions in their own territorial states.

In England, Germany and the Netherlands the debate on con-

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<sup>208</sup> *VZ* 1781-ii, 193–202, 237–246, 285–294.

fessions and subscription rapidly gained momentum in the 1760s and 1770s.<sup>209</sup> In the Republic the debate had been long in coming, but it was suddenly at the centre of public attention when Goodricke began his discussions with Bonnet and Van der Kemp, Marmontel triggered the so-called ‘Socratic War’, and Van der Marck was expelled from the Groningen academy. Another spate of books appeared around 1790, when the Dutch Lutheran church was literally divided over the issue. The ‘Socratic War’ had been sparked off by the Dutch translation in 1768 of Jean-François Marmontel’s novel *Bélisaire*.<sup>210</sup> In the novel the general Belisarius, fallen from grace under Emperor Justinian I, explains his enlightened views on society, politics, and religion. Contemporaries loved Marmontel’s style and valued his ideas. However, to claim salvation for heathens like Titus, Trajan and Antoninus, or Marcus Aurelius and Cato, on account of their moral behaviour, was one step too far for both the professors of the Sorbonne and the right reverend *dominees* of the Republic. Petrus Hofstede started the Dutch episode in the Socratic War with *The Bélisaire of Mr. Marmontel judged* (1769), a relatively matter-of-fact exposition of the lack of heathen virtue. It was meant to convince readers that no pagan could possibly qualify for eternal felicity on the basis of his morality, if only because there had been very little heathen morality to go around. Hofstede made this clear in a learned and annotated account based on extensive knowledge of the classics. Hofstede homed in on what was traditionally one of the weaker points in the moral make-up of Socrates, namely, his presumed pederastic inclinations. This in turn inspired a retort by the Remonstrant Cornelis Nozeman (1721–1786) called *The honour of Socrates upheld*. The debate soon developed into a discussion on semi-Pelagian theology and, consequently, on the public status of Arminianism, the confessions, and subscription. Other major participants in the debate included Van der Meersch, who defended the Remonstrant right to freedom of worship. The resulting battle of the books lasted until

<sup>209</sup> A translated essay in *VL* provided an account of the English subscription controversy of 1772, caused by the submission of a request regarding subscription to parliament; *VL* 1772-ii, 348–360. The same request was quoted by the translator of *A serious address to the church of Scotland* (1739); D.tr. *De vrye en redelyke godsdienst* (1772), preface; the translator dedicated the book to the *Advocate* and claimed that the book had been written by Francis Hutcheson. On Germany, see below.

<sup>210</sup> Renwick, *Marmontel, Voltaire and the Bélisaire affair*; a recent treatment of the Dutch context: Van der Wall, *Socrates in de hemel?*



1 May 1773, when the States of Holland forbade further publication. Owing to a German translation of Hofstede's book,<sup>211</sup> the Socratic War was exported to Prussia. At Halle, the philosopher Johann August Eberhard (1739–1809) published a *Neue Apologie des Sokrates* (1772), translated into Dutch in the following year. Eberhard's *Neue Apologie* was not so much a defence of Socrates as an attempt to disqualify orthodox tradition by equating the Socratic view of life with the original intentions of Jesus, and by subsuming both heathendom and Christendom in a single history of humanity.<sup>212</sup> This was a sophisticated level of reasoning, and one not openly supported by many Dutchmen, but its bearing on the public status of confessions was perfectly obvious to all. As one commentator remarked, Eberhard all but dispensed with the *theologia polemica* traditionally employed to defend public orthodoxy.<sup>213</sup>

To give their arguments against the religious establishment as much authority and legitimacy as possible, Dutch subscription critics pursued their aims via the translated writings of recognized, if not always reputable, clergymen and academics from foreign lands. England still supplied the critical books she had been providing since the early eighteenth century (we have seen that James Foster's writings remained immensely popular), but many such writers were also dissenters whose social and ecclesiastical standing was rather less impressive than their arguments. Hence, the country to which Dutch critics now turned was Germany. Here the subscription issue had been discussed during the conflict over pietism around the turn of the century, but was being revived again in all intensity during the later 1760s.<sup>214</sup> Here, too, the leading critics tended to be established divines, supported financially by the state and morally by enlight-

<sup>211</sup> P. Hofstede, *De Belisarius van den heer Marmontel beoordeeld* (1769); tr. as *Des Herrn Marmontels herausgegebenen Belisar beurtheilt* (1769).

<sup>212</sup> J.A. Eberhard, *Nieuwe apologie van Sokrates* (1773); Böhm, *Sokrates im achtzehnten Jahrhundert*, 154–158, 226–234. The book provoked several replies, among others by (a) Johannes Tissel (1752–1813), a Dutch Lutheran preacher who had studied at Göttingen, with *Apologie voor de leere der verzoeninge* [*Apology for the doctrine of atonement*] (1774); (b) Daniel Théodore Huet (1724–1795), a Walloon minister at Utrecht, with *Réflexions sur la Nouvelle apologie pour Socrate* (1774) (D.tr. *Bedenkingen over de Nieuwe Apologie voor Sokrates* (1774); and (c) the Reformed poet and jurist Hieronymus van Alphen, with *Eenige leerstukken van den protestantschen godsdienst* [*Some doctrines of the Protestant religion*] (1775).

<sup>213</sup> VL 1773-i, 366–368.

<sup>214</sup> Aner, *Theologie der Lessingzeit*, 254–269.

ened periodicals. One typical authority—a high-ranking clergyman appointed by a powerful and respected monarch—was Wilhelm Crichton (1732–1805), Reformed professor of theology at Frankfurt an der Oder since 1766, and after 1772 court preacher at Königsberg. His work was introduced into the United Provinces by a certain ‘L.S.’ who in 1773 submitted to the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oeffeningen* the translation of a Latin treatise by Crichton on fundamental articles.<sup>215</sup> The translator stated that he had discovered the treatise when reading the second edition of Crichton’s *De fide humana libri IV* (1764; second edition 1771), a ‘short but neat little work’ on the status of human beliefs. Crichton began his essay on fundamentals by noting that many learned men had written on the subject, but that most of them had stood ‘less for the cause of Truth than that of Party.’ He himself was a man who openly dared to disregard human authority, laws and factions in religious matters, and followed only Reason and a proper understanding of Scripture. An ecclesiastical authority such as Crichton ought to be listened to, believed ‘L.S.’, who was probably also the translator of *De fide humana* itself, which appeared in Dutch in 1774.<sup>216</sup> The latter translation had the desired effect. The *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oeffeningen* spoke highly of the book, written by a ‘serious Theologian, experienced in Ecclesiastical History’. The reviewer considered the book to be one of the most remarkable on the subject.<sup>217</sup> In an exceptionally long review, the orthodox *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek*, by contrast, rejected the book as superfluous, since no Protestant in his right mind recognized the authority of tradition. Yet a whole crowd of self-styled ‘Moderates’ were now swarming out into the world to follow their masters submissively in spreading drivel about councils, synods, catechisms and confessions, and accusing Protestants in general and Lutherans and Calvinists in particular of accepting human authority in religious matters. Crichton was such a Moderate, snorted the reviewer, and a particularly inept one too.<sup>218</sup>

Ominously dedicated to Johann G. Töllner, Crichton’s *De fide humana* is divided into four parts. Part I contains an exposition of the nature of human belief, as well as a rejection of the authority

<sup>215</sup> *VL* 1773-ii, 243–256, 291–300; W. Crichton, *Dissertationes duo de praecipuis doctrinae Christianae capitibus, quae articulos fundamentales vocare solent* (1771).

<sup>216</sup> D.tr. W. Crichton, *Verhandeling over 't menschebyk geloov* (1774).

<sup>217</sup> *VL* 1774-i, 530–532.

<sup>218</sup> *NB* 1774/II-i, 514–533.

of the Church Fathers. Part II contains eight chapters on the authority of councils and synods. Crichton discusses and rejects the authority of several general councils, including Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon. His main reason for rejecting these councils is his contention that it is more likely that one single person is free from error than that a convention as a whole is able to establish the truth. Among other things, he argues that the councils had no right to judge heretics, and that they were in any case too ignorant to do so. The councils, moreover, had been organized in such a way that the so-called orthodox faction was bound to triumph from the outset. In Part III, Crichton discusses the usefulness and the necessity of confessions of faith and disputes their authority. Confessions can be useful, but they are neither necessary nor authoritative. Crichton argues that the authors of confessions were themselves uncertain of their own doctrinal positions; that confessions are not the result of divine inspiration (which is evident from the fact that in Nicaea there were daily additions to decisions made earlier by the same council); that they are inadequate; that the Reformed would have done better to maintain only the simple confession of Augsburg; and that obligatory subscription to a confession is untenable. Finally, in Part IV Crichton asserts that no confession has ever answered to the purpose of those who drafted it. Arianism was not eradicated, as the case of the Arian emperor Valens illustrates. Nestorianism still exists today. Theodosius never abjured monophysitism. If there had been no councils and no endless splitting of theological hairs, there would have been markedly less heresies. After all, a heresy is merely a difference of opinion on convictions introduced by humans, not by God. The persecution of heresies, moreover, has only led to their being disseminated more rapidly. In the meantime, the maintenance of confessions has resulted in the abuse of scriptural truth, religion falling into disrepute, the obstruction of scholarly progress, and restraint of conscience. Confessions are upheld only because of prejudice, ignorance, laziness, lust for power, and so on.

The treatise on fundamentals (which has 1 Tim. 6:3–5, on the ‘perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds’, as an epigraph), offers a similar argument. Here Crichton’s main point is that the ‘most necessary article’ of the Christian religion is ‘that Jesus is the Christ’, as Hobbes contended.<sup>219</sup> Other (second-rate) doctrines may be found

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<sup>219</sup> Crichton, *Verhandeling over 't menschelyk geloov*, 221; Van Eijnatten, ‘The debate on religious unity’.

in the Apostles' Creed, but Crichton observes that neither the denial of doctrines nor the adherence to errors necessarily implies exclusion from salvation. Denying certain doctrines may lead to exclusion from a particular church, but it never leads to excommunication from the universal church. To the reviewer in the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek*, Crichton's aims were clear. By magnifying a multitude of all too human errors, and pointing out the doubtful, blameworthy, contradictory, useless and dangerous consequences of a supposedly blind attachment to human authorities (Church Fathers, councils, synods, formularies, and confessions), the German theologian introduced 'unreserved *Syncretism*' in the name of charity. And to publicly refer his readers to Hobbes was a slap in the face of any Christian.<sup>220</sup> To make matters worse, the Dutch translator supported these contentions. In a bitter, anticlerical preface, he lashed out against the established clergy, insisting that they tried to set themselves up as an independent estate to force their own peculiar views on others. He found it incomprehensible that sovereign rulers still gave free reign to pretentious ecclesiastics.

Crichton's treatise exemplifies the radicalization of the Dutch toleration debate during the 1770s. It is not that his arguments were novel. But the sheer number of publications concerned with the subscription issue, the open vindication of arguments once regarded as radical and dangerous, and the harsh accusations coming from both sides of the debate, all this was unprecedented. Another person of authority invoked in defence of religious liberty was the *Oberkonsistorialrat* and geographer at Berlin, Anton Friedrich Büsching (1724–1793). A reviewer of his *Allgemeine Anmerkungen über die symbolischen Schriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (1770) remarked that it was apparent that confessional strictures did not carry much weight in Prussia, and that German contributions on the subject were fully comparable to 'the Writings of the English.'<sup>221</sup> The Berlin pastor Friedrich German Lüdke (1730–1792), who had begun the German controversy over the authority of confessions in 1767, later restated his views in *Ueber Toleranz und Gewissensfreiheit* (1774). Lüdke, distinguishing between true and false religious zeal, showed how the former contributed to

<sup>220</sup> *NB* 1774/II-i, 523–524, 533, as the reviewer pointed out, Crichton also praised Töllner and Vernet and dared assert that James Foster was filled with the Holy Spirit.

<sup>221</sup> D.tr. A.F. Büsching, *Aanmerkingen over de symbolische schriften* (1772); *VL* 1772-i, 463–465.

toleration and liberty of conscience, and appended a plea for freedom of inquiry.<sup>222</sup> Töllner, yet another established Calvinist divine, added to the German and Dutch discussions with his *Unterricht von symbolischen Büchern überhaupt* (1769). He defended the usefulness as well as the necessity of confessions, but also disputed their mandatory status and argued that the number of doctrines discussed in them ought to be substantially reduced. In addition, claimed Töllner, a pastor who had subscribed to the confessions of his church, but no longer found them tenable, is obliged to retain his position and explain himself before his congregation, so that the church can benefit from his ideas, and charity and truth will triumph. Orthodox reviewers, needless to say, regarded this Nicodemist apologetics as a subtle way of dispensing with confessions for once and for all.<sup>223</sup>

No less controversial was Johann August Starck (1741–1816), professor of theology at Königsberg and Mitau and subsequently Lutheran head preacher at Hesse-Darmstadt. A prominent apologist for freemasonry, his *Freimüthige Betrachtungen über das Christentum* (1780) was actually a defence of Bahrdt.<sup>224</sup> Starck's translator was Willem Goede (1764–1839). As a Lutheran minister at Kampen, Goede had tried to introduce liturgical and educational reforms, which had the general effect of reducing Lutheranism to 'simple' Christendom.<sup>225</sup> In 1795, however, he left his church for the Remonstrant Brotherhood, after his Lutheran colleagues had rejected his proposal to renounce all confessions and exchange the name 'Lutheran' for 'purely Christian'. In his preface and various annotations to Starck's book, Goede, who had studied at Jena and had a broad knowledge of German theology, criticized the way orthodox supporters of formularies trespassed on Christ's humanitarian law of 'universal love'. Whereas the *quatenus* (acceptance of confessional doctrine *insofar as* it accorded with Scripture) was making headway in Germany, the *quia* (acceptance of confessional doctrine *because* it accorded with Scripture) was still the rule

<sup>222</sup> D.tr. F.G. Lüdke, *Verhandeling over de verdraegzaemheid en gewetens-vryheid* (1776).

<sup>223</sup> D.tr. J.G. Töllner, *Algemeen onderricht van de symbolische boeken*, Leiden 1774; *NB* 1774/II-i, 336–342.

<sup>224</sup> D.tr. Starck, *Vrijmoedige bedenkingen over het Christendom* (1790–1791), tr. by W. Goede; the illustration on the title page sharply contrasts Jesus and his apostles with the pharisees. Starck also wrote a *Versuch einer Geschichte des Arianismus* (1783–1785); D.tr. *Proeve eener geschiedenis van het arianismus* (1788), edited by Paulus van Hemert. Starck believed that the Arian controversy would not have led to schism if the Alexandrian party had not pronounced its anathema.

<sup>225</sup> Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 49–54.

in the Netherlands. Goede found himself in trouble after he had published the book, but the Kampen magistrate ruled against the objections of the local clergy after the names of the author and the translator had been revealed. Starck himself, incidentally, had been similarly supported by the then king of Prussia against protestations from the theological faculty at Halle. Not surprisingly, Goede applauded Starck's attempt to bring Christendom back to its original simplicity, do away with religious parties and sects in the name of charity, criticize ecclesiastical authority, and alert his readers to the spread of Protestant Papism. In his footnotes he deplored the activities of Goeze, defended Semler against Starck, quoted Priestley and Steinbart, and thanked Bahrtdt for his (highly controversial) translation of the Bible. The Dutch, it is clear, were closely following foreign subscription debates.<sup>226</sup>

Not all writers were as extreme as Crichton, Lüdke or Starck. The views of the Huguenot Isaac de Beausobre (1659–1738), who had fled France and ended up, via Rotterdam and Dessau, as a preacher in Berlin, represented the moderate but critical stance of many preachers in the Walloon church. Beausobre's French *Sermons* were published posthumously by his son Charles Louis in 1755, but only translated into Dutch in 1768.<sup>227</sup> The collection included sermons on charity, mutual respect, peace, and concord. Consensus, preached Beausobre, consists of doctrinal harmony and mutual affection. Since there will never be full agreement on doctrine, Christians will have to accept each other's differences, including, in particular, those concerning predestination. This was a succinct statement as any of the critical views welcomed by the less conservative Reformed divines. The list of German titles goes on and on. A Latin tract on heresy by Johann Jakob Zimmermann (1695–1756), professor of natural law

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<sup>226</sup> Another translation concerned J. Heilmann, a pastor at Krefeld, who was accused of Socinianism in 1775. [Engelbert vom Bruck, a Krefeld merchant], *Etwas ueber den Werth der Symbolen zur Beförderung der Toleranz*, 1777; D.tr. *Verhandeling over de waardye der symbolen* (1779). Cf. also *VB* 1791-i, 587–588, with a reference to Heinrich Gottlieb Zerrenner (1750–1811), a preacher at Derenburg, who contended in his *Volksaufklärung, übersichtliche und freimüthige Darstellung ihre Hindernisse* (1786) that confessions should be subject to change. The *Bibliotheca Schultensiana* mentions *Freymüthige Gedanken bey den heutigen Streitigkeiten über die symbolischen Bücher* (1774), an anonymous publication by the Lutheran clergyman Andreas J. Hecker (1746–1819).

<sup>227</sup> D.tr. I. de Beausobre, *Predicatie over het twaalfde hoofdstuk des Briefs aan de Romeinen* (1768), tr. by the Mennonite Gerrit van Olst. Beausobres' views on toleration are treated in Schwarzbach, 'Politics and ethics in the Huguenot diaspora'.

and church history at Zürich, appeared in 1773.<sup>228</sup> Ironically, it was meant as a reply to the earlier translation of Zimmermann's *Meditatio de praestantia religionis Christianae collatae cum philosophia Socratis* (1729), which had been equipped with a learned, and, according to some, redundant foreword by Hofstede.<sup>229</sup> Predictably, the Swiss divine contended that 'heretic' actually means 'sectarian', and that, apart from the Spanish and the Portuguese, the Dutch undoubtedly had the most intolerant clergy. The translator of the treatise spoke slightly of Calvin, the five articles of Dort, the Reformed formularies, and ecclesiastical approbations.<sup>230</sup>

Georg Joachim Zollikofer (1733–1788), a distinguished Reformed sermonizer at Leipzig and friend of leading *Popularphilosophen* like Sulzer and Garve, was likewise employed in re-educating the Dutch Calvinist clergy in the true limits of confessional authority. His popular *Predigten* (1769, followed by a collection published posthumously in 1788–1789) were given excellent reviews from the 1770s till the 1790s—with the exception of the orthodox *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek*, which accused him of avoiding traditional dogma. His work included sermons on civil and religious liberty, clerical office, indifference, and toleration. In a sermon on Eph. 4:2, called 'Some basic rules of toleration', the German orator defended freedom of thought and independent judgement. To encourage the latter, Zollikofer adduced four considerations: (1) opinions and customs are irrelevant to salvation; (2) belief as a purely mental understanding is of little value; (3) most human errors are innocent; (4) salvation is not a necessary consequence of worshipping God in a particular fashion.<sup>231</sup> As late as 1794 Zollikofer was accused of fostering indifference by reducing the essence

<sup>228</sup> J.J. Zimmerman, 'De crimine haeretificationis, eiusque caussis et remediis', in: *Theses theologicae miscellanae XX* (1751); also in: *Opuscula theologici historici et philosophici argumenti* (1751–1757), II-ii, 761–958); D.tr. *De kettermaakery in haare verkeerdheid en waare oorzaken voorgedragen* (1773). Zimmermann also wrote on Calvinist-Lutheran unionism.

<sup>229</sup> D.tr. Zimmermann, *De voortreflykheid des Christelyken godsdiens* (1770); *VL* 1770-i (IV), 421–425. There were other connections with Germany. Cf. an essay in defence of Xantippe's honour by C.A. Heumann, originally published in the *Acta Philosophorum* of 1715; D.tr. *Xantippe's, Socrates huisvrouw's eer verdedigd* (1769). Also J.M. Gesner's denial of Socrates' paedophilia: 'Socrates sanctus paederasta', in: *Commentarii Societatis Regiae Göttingensis* II (1752); reissued separately in 1769 by Van Goens.

<sup>230</sup> *NB* 1775-i, 73–79.

<sup>231</sup> D.tr. G.J. Zollikofer, *Leerredenen* (1773–1788); review in *NB* 1780-i, 283–285; *VB* 1792-i, 199–204. *Nagelaten leerredenen* (1790–1796). In his sermon on 'Christian Forbearance', Zollikofer argued in favour of spiritual harmony and concord rather than doctrinal or liturgical unity; *VL* 1792-i, 312–315.

of Christendom to very few fundamentals indeed, and putting too much stress on the practice of morality.<sup>232</sup> In *Über die Toleranz* (1789), Diedrich Hermann Hegewisch (1740–1812), since 1780 professor of philosophy at Kiel, determined those instances in which certain rules of toleration ought to be applied within the state. A faithful supporter of ecclesiastical establishment, Hegewisch argued that the state had no need to pursue religious unity. It required only decent citizens, and could rest content when such were produced by the various denominations in the land.<sup>233</sup> And Van Hamelsveld translated the essay, *Warum nennen wir uns Protestanten?* (1790) by Johann Georg Rosenmüller (1736–1815), a prolific Lutheran theology professor at Leipzig. Responding to Wöllner's *Religionsedikt*, Rosenmüller advocated freedom of inquiry as opposed to mere acquiescence in confessional truth.<sup>234</sup>

In the face of this torrent of German tracts, native Dutch writers kept their end up. Bucer was exhumed as a peacekeeper in a conflict over the Lord's Supper, and the anonymous author availed himself of the opportunity by condemning the use of formularies.<sup>235</sup> A certain 'Aretophilus' in 1780 published an exchange of letters between a Reformed minister and a jurist 'to further the cause of toleration'. The letters concerned the question, posed by the minister, of whether a member or preacher of the Reformed Church, having changed his opinions on the doctrine established by synodal decision and patronized by the High Authorities, could stay within that church without violating his conscience. The jurist defended the Nicodemists'

<sup>232</sup> *VB* e.g. 1794-i, 591–593.

<sup>233</sup> D.tr. D.H. Hegewisch, *Over de tolerantie* (1790, 1792). Hegewisch distinguished between four different kinds of toleration: (1) the mutual toleration of various sects; (2) the state's toleration of various sects; (3) the toleration of one party within the established church in respect of another, when differences on ecclesiastical doctrine, customs and organization arise; and (4) the toleration of the state in respect of the members of a particular party in the church.

<sup>234</sup> *VB* 1793-ii, 443–454; *Heinemeyer* F-Ha: 278 attributes the translation to Van Hamelsveld. Another response to the *Religionsedikt* was Bahrdt's political play *Das Religionsedict* (1789); D.tr. *Het Pruissisch religie-edict* (1789). Orthodox Lutherans celebrated Wöllner's edict by immediately publishing a translation: *Religions edict* (1788).

<sup>235</sup> [Anon.], *De verzezene Bucerus, als vrede-maaker tusschen de hedendaagsche Zwinghianen en Calvinisten, in Nederland* [*The risen Bucer, as peacemaker between present-day Zwinglians and Calvinists in the Netherlands*] (1775); *VL* 1776-i, 6–10; *NB* 1776-i, 86–91. On the Arminians' appropriation of Bucer in the early seventeenth century, see Spruyt, 'Martin Bucers *Gulden Brief*'. In 1776, J.J. Schultens mentioned the tract as one publication that would cause a lot of turmoil in the church; ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by J.J. Schultens, Leiden, dd. 5–12–1776.



view, recently justified by Töllner, by claiming that people who entertained doubts were obliged to remain within the church. He drew this conclusion from two principles, the universal human right to search out the truth, and the aim of the church, which is to foster the happiness of its members. The true universal church is an inward church, and external organizations are merely a means to advance it. All impediments to the pursuit of truth are unlawful. It is imperative, insisted the lawyer, that right-minded people try to improve churches from within.<sup>236</sup> The anti-synodal contents of the *Thoughts on the origins of hair-splitting* (1792) speak for themselves,<sup>237</sup> while the anonymous *Candid thoughts on the so-called formularies of concord* (c. 1793) demonstrated that confessions were incompatible with the principles of Protestantism. The *Vaderlandsche Bibliotheek*, reviewing the book in 1793, somewhat belatedly expressed its satisfaction that the Dutch were finally emulating the Germans by introducing the subscription debate into the United Provinces.<sup>238</sup>

Critics were not the only ones who made themselves heard. Johann Ernst Schubert (1717–1774), an orthodox Wolffian and theology professor at Greifswald, contributed to the Dutch debate with the *Geschichte des römischen Papstes Vigilus* (1769). Adjoined to this history of Pope Vigilus († 555; Vigilus, incidentally, had come to power with the help of Belisarius, so that for insiders the link with the Socratic War was obvious), were Schubert's 'Betrachtungen über die Glaubensformeln'. Although he emphasized that a wise and just prince will never seek to dominate the consciences of his subjects, Schubert nevertheless suggested that certain circumstances require the imposition of confessions. Once a confession is in force, no magistrate has the freedom to appoint pastors who do not subscribe to it. Moreover, no clergyman should accept his office when he is not convinced of the truth of the church's confession, nor may he teach anything contradicting it. Schubert accorded the ruler a great deal of authority in the organization of synods and the implementation of its decisions.<sup>239</sup> This legalist argumentation obviously appealed to Calvinist

<sup>236</sup> [Anon.], *Brieven, gewisselt tusschen een gereformeerd predikant en een rechtsgeleerden* [c. 1780]; *VL* 1781-i, 582–584.

<sup>237</sup> [Anon.], *Invallende gedachten aangaande den oorsprong der hairkloveryen* (1792); a very positive review in *De Recensent* IV (1793), 120–125.

<sup>238</sup> [Anon.], *Vrijmoedige gedagten over de zogenoemde formulieren van eenigheid* (s.a.); *VL* 1794-i, 443; *De Recensent* IV (1793), 244–245; *VB* 1793-i, 385–397.

<sup>239</sup> D.tr. J.E. Schubert, *Het leven of de geschiedenis van Vigilus paus te Rome* (1770),

orthodoxy. No one less than Goeze was brought into play to combat Büsching, but as a reviewer said, his plea for the strict maintenance of confessions could not satisfy those who put more value on furthering the Christian Church than preserving a particular denomination.<sup>240</sup> The orthodox Calvinist clergy contributed with writings of their own. In 1776, for example, the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* published an essay 'On theological systems'. The author opposed the current tendency to reduce theological systems to a bare minimum, ostensibly so that even simple uneducated Christians could understand them. Even pastors and academics now disparaged theological systems, in spite of the fact that church officials were appointed, and paid, to defend them.<sup>241</sup>

#### 6.5 THE RESULTS: DOCTRINAL SIMPLICITY AND MORAL PRACTICE

Possibly taking her cue from Johann Winckelmann's aesthetic concept of *edle Einfalt und stille Größe*, a contemporary writer praised the uncomplicated faith of the apostles in terms of 'noble simplicity'.<sup>242</sup> Indeed, never had so many divines evinced so much interest in fundamental articles as in the last three or four decades of the eighteenth century. The German new reformers merely radicalized a pursuit to which everybody lent a hand, barring the ultra-traditional.<sup>243</sup> To the contentment of his reviewers, the Swiss pastor Lavater celebrated a

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tr. by Antoni F. Klenke, a Dutch Lutheran schoolmaster; review in *VL* 1770-i (IV), 101–104.

<sup>240</sup> J.M. Goeze, *Nothwendige Erinnerungen zu des Herrn D. Büschings allgemeinen Anmerkungen* (1770); D.tr. *Noodzaaklyke herinneringen* (1773), tr. by A.F. Klenke.

<sup>241</sup> *NB* 1776-ii, 289–316. For a proper defence of such systems, the anonymous orthodox author referred his readers to the *Isagoge historico-theologica* (1730) by J.F. Budde. A particularly critical denunciation of systematic divinity and synodal authority was later included in a review of Budde's *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae* (1742) in *De Recensent* I (1787), 35–45; D.tr. J.F. Budde, *Onderwys in de leerstukken der godgeleerdheid* (1786–1787); tr. by J.P.H. Hildebrand under the supervision of the orthodox Lutheran minister J.M. Boon.

<sup>242</sup> Wolff-Bekker, preface, in: Craig, *Het leeven van Jezus Christus*, XI; on noble simplicity in Dutch literary culture, see Johannes, *De lof der aalbessen*.

<sup>243</sup> An *aufgeklärte* German writer who was somewhat sceptical about the attempt to restore the church's apostolic simplicity was Georg F. Meier, *Betrachtung über das Bemühen der christlichen Religion ihre erste Einfalt und Reinigkeit wieder herzustellen* (1775); D. tr. *Bedenkingen over den toelag, om den christelyken godsdienst in zyne eerste eenvoudigheid en zuiverheid weer te herstellen* (1775); on Meier, see section 7.4 below.

fundamental *Lehre des Evangelium, die Gerechtigkeit durch den Glauben* (1775), avoiding scholastic terminology, providing a clear discussion of proofs, and adding evangelical exhortations.<sup>244</sup> Having dispensed, at least in theory, with the legal and moral basis of the ecclesiastical establishment (as we saw in the previous section), opinion makers were now bound to develop the polite public as an alternative moral and religious order. To be able to appeal to the freely held inward convictions of ordinary citizens, it was more than ever necessary to bring Christianity back to basics. The logical result was an emphasis on doctrinal simplicity. As this section seeks to make clear, simplicity in doctrine went hand in glove with a stress on the inward moral life.

Doctrinal simplicity had a logical bearing on ecclesiastical toleration as much as it did on evangelical missionary goals. The fewer the doctrines in a church, the easier it was to achieve concord, and the greater the number of people who would want to become church members. However, as the controversial activities of the German new reformers illustrate, simplicity did not necessarily mean subscription to orthodox essentials, propagated, for instance, by evangelical divines like Lavater. The Reformed professor of rhetoric at Mitau (modern Jelgava in Latvia), Johann Nicolaus Tiling (1739–1798), eloquently pointed out that ‘religion is a reasonable, simple, joyful, heart- and life-inspiring belief in GOD, PROVIDENCE—and the DIGNITY OF MAN.’ He blithely proceeded to eradicate the supernatural from the Christian faith.<sup>245</sup> Avoiding confessional doctrine with perfect equanimity, the Dutch author who proffered a crash course in Christianity by using Socratic dialogue achieved similar results.<sup>246</sup> Such writers were bound to appreciate the work of the Genevan divine Jacques Vernet, known in the Netherlands for having rejected the Athanasian Creed, and charged in his own country with hypocrisy, blasphemy, and general support for the cause of Voltairean unbe-

<sup>244</sup> D.tr. J.C. Lavater, *De wezenlijke leer van het Euangelie* (1776); VL 1776-i, 473–474. Lavater was enormously popular in the Netherlands. Note that in Switzerland Lavater attempted to unify the Roman Catholic and Reformed confessions and the nation through his oft-reprinted *Schweizerliedern*, songs to be sung ‘ohne Unterschied der Religion’; Im Hof, ‘Pietismus und ökumenischer Patriotismus’.

<sup>245</sup> J.N. Ti[l]ling, *Was ist Religie?* (1787); D. tr. *Wat is godsdienst?* (1790), tr. by ‘H.’; quoted in VL 1790-i, 272–276.

<sup>246</sup> [Anon.], *Schetze der eenvoudigste bewijzen voor de waarheid, van den Christelijken godsdienst* [*Sketch of the simplest proofs for the truths of the Christian religion*] (1783); NB 1784-i, 475–480.

lief.<sup>247</sup> Devotees of scholastic theology were not going to like Vernet's *Instruction chrétienne* (1754), noted one reviewer. The Genevan did not waste his time on doctrinal differences and avoided discord by focusing on the contents of the Bible, which conduced to uniting believers in love and charity.<sup>248</sup> German contributions to the topic were, again, overwhelming in substance and number. Heinrich Philipp Conrad Henke (1752–1809), theology professor at Helmstedt, was one of the new reformers who pursued simplicity in religious matters and lost no love on traditional doctrine.<sup>249</sup> Another German simplifier of the faith was Jakob Jochims (1719–1790), *Probst* and pedagogue in Danish Süderdithmarsen. The Dutch translation of his *Anleitung über die Religion überhaupt und über die geoffenbarte insbesondere vernünftig und schriftmässig zu denken* (1777) was hailed as an excellent substitute for abstruse theological systems, since it discussed doctrines like the Trinity in such a way that no Christian could possibly be offended.<sup>250</sup> Yet another excellent pedagogue was August Hermann Niemeyer (1754–1828), a theology professor at Halle. His *Populäre und praktische Theologie, oder Materialien des christlichen Volksunterrichts* (1792) contributed to purifying theology from its redundant, confused and obscure accretions.<sup>251</sup>

Several major writers played a part in advancing doctrinal simplicity in the Reformed Church itself. Ahasverus van den Berg (1733–1807), one of the main contributors to the revised psalmody of 1773, was a relatively conservative minister who nonetheless kept his distance from the polemical *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek*.<sup>252</sup> Having gravitated progressively to the Patriot party, he turned down an invitation to join the National Convention in 1796. He preferred instead to fight

<sup>247</sup> Cf. *Algemeene Bibliotheek* III (1782), 143–144; *VL* 1768-i, 80.

<sup>248</sup> D.tr. J. Vernet, *Christelyk onderwijs* (1767–1770); *VL* 1768-i, 232.

<sup>249</sup> H.P.C. Henke, *Auswahl biblische Erzählungen für die erste Jugend* (1788); D.tr. *Uitgezogte bijbelsche verhaalen, tot een leesboek voor de jeugd* (1794), with a preface by J.F. Martinet.

<sup>250</sup> D.tr. J. Jochims, *Handleiding, om over den godsdienst (. . .) rede- en schriftmaatig te denken* [c. 1790]; *VL* 1790-i, 408–410; *VB* 1790-i, 224–230. In similar vein, albeit with a pietist bias: the *Predigten an christlichen Eltern zum Besten einer guten Erziehung* (1776), by Christian Friedrich Engelmann (1739–1793), a Lutheran preacher in Silesia; D.tr. *Leerredenen aan Christelyke ouders* [1784].

<sup>251</sup> D.tr. A.H. Niemeyer, *Volks- en beoefenende godgeleerdheid* (1793). Note that Niemeyer's *Charakteristik der Bibel* (1775), was as great a success in the Netherlands as it was in Germany; D.tr. *De karakterkunde van den bijbel* (1779–1783). Even the *NB* 1785-i, 265–272, appreciated it for the views on toleration Niemeyer derived from St. Paul's character.

<sup>252</sup> Bosch, *En nooit meer oude Psalmen zingen*, 180.

for the rights of the Reformed Church, being adamantly opposed to new-fangled ideas concerning human equality. Van den Berg argued (with an appeal to Warburton's *Alliance*) that equal treatment of religions led to competition and hence disorder, and that the traditional Protestant 'system' would no longer be safe in the hands of the radical dissenters who were so prominent at the Convention. He supported the formularies, fearing that tumult would arise in orthodox quarters if they were abolished; but he also believed that they could be interpreted broadly enough to allow for substantial spiritual variety within the church.<sup>253</sup> Van den Berg, who read extensively in German journals, was the first Dutch theologian to write catechetical books based, not on the Heidelberg Catechism, but on his own simple exposition of Christian truths. In these books, published in duodecimo in the 1780s and 1790s, he emphasized historical events and the morals that could be drawn from them, and generally avoided doctrine.<sup>254</sup> A second popularizer of simple truths was Jacob Nuys van Klinkenberg (1744–1817), a theology professor at the Amsterdam *Athenaeum* since 1784.<sup>255</sup> He was an orthodox divine who wrote vast apologies emphasizing the utilitarian claim that Christianity was more advantageous and more satisfactory than unbelief.<sup>256</sup> He, too, derived techniques of popularization from his German colleagues, of whose writings he possessed first-rate and first-hand knowledge. In 1797, he translated an essay on the Trinity by Gottlob August Baumgarten-Crusius (1752–1816), a Lutheran church official at Merseburg.<sup>257</sup> The translation, to which Klinkenberg added annotations twice as long as the original text, was a frontal attack on the new reformers, but also evinced his appreciation of the philological and exegetical work done by Ernesti, Nösselt and Döderlein. Above all, Klinkenberg

<sup>253</sup> Bosch, *En nooit meer oude Psalmen zingen*, 186–189; Van den Berg added that Van der Os and Van der Marck were justly evicted from the church.

<sup>254</sup> Bosch, *En nooit meer oude Psalmen zingen*, 189–192. Thus Van den Berg's *Bijbelsche historievragen* (1778) was printed repeatedly in the Netherlands, and even translated into German: *Fragen aus der biblischen Geschichte für die Jugend und christliche Haushaltungen* (1786).

<sup>255</sup> Van der Wall, *Verlicht christendom of verfynd heidendom?*. Some reviewers detested Klinkenberg as a patronizing vestige of an obsolete orthodoxy; cf. *De Recensent* I (1787), 359–361.

<sup>256</sup> J. Nuys van Klinkenberg, *De voordeelen van den godsdienst (. . .) voorgesteld en aangedrongen* [*The advantages of religion shown and recommended*] (1770–1776).

<sup>257</sup> G.A. Baumgarten-Crusius, *Schrift und Vernunft für denkende Christen* (1793–1794); D.tr. (partial) *De leer der drieënhed tegen de zogenaemde nieuwe hervormers verdedigd* (1797).

attempted to popularize Christianity in books written for the less literate and the young. They were oft reprinted, could be cheaply bought, and were sometimes distributed free of charge among the poor.<sup>258</sup>

Many of the books advocating doctrinal simplicity were based on the contemporary wisdom that children can be taught straightforward truths ('there is a God', for example) at an early age, and that they ought to learn about religious differences only when they are much older. Only then will they be in a position to make an independent choice based on inner conviction. Thus, the Mennonite Daniel Hovens (1735–1795) restricted his instruction to the clearest and most important Christian truths and obligations. He believed that the particular tenets of his own denomination were of secondary importance, and could be learnt later.<sup>259</sup> His colleague Cornelis de Vries made the same point in a *Catechism* of the 'principles of Revelation.' He offered an historical account of the Christian religion (natural theology, pre-Mosaic era, Mosaic Law, New Testament) compatible with the doctrinal views of all Protestant denominations, making certain to provide his readers with a reasonable and sufficient knowledge of salvific truths without encumbering them with superfluous doctrine.<sup>260</sup> Polemical theology was not done, or little done; but if it *had* to be done (and academics could hardly avoid it), it had to be done prudently. The 'science of spiritual warfare' is a delicate issue, warned the German publicist Jakob Friedrich Freiherr von Bielefeld (1717–1770).<sup>261</sup>

<sup>258</sup> Van der Wall, *Verlicht christendom*, 13.

<sup>259</sup> [D. Hovens], *Lesboek voor de kinderen der Christenen* [*Primer for children of Christians*] [1788?]; *VL* 1788-i, 61.

<sup>260</sup> C. de Vries, *Kathechismus der Heilige Schriftuur* (1782); *VL* 1783-i, 143–149; cf. also *De Recensent I* (1787), 114. A reviewer in *VL* 1783-i, 12–13, discussed the anonymous *Proeve eener bevatbaarer en vollediger onderwyzing in den godsdienst* [*Essay of a more understandable and more complete religious instruction*] (1782), an 'explanation' of the Heidelberg Catechism offering general religious truths that could be understood by the youth of all denominations; as the reviewer in *NB* 1783-i, 202–204, noted, it also avoided traditional doctrine. Likewise the *Schets van den Christelyken godsdienst, opgesteld voor een vader des huisgezins, tot onderwys zyner kinderen* [*Sketch of the Christian religion, written by a household father for educating his children*] (1791); the *VL* 1792-i, 275–276, claimed that the book had been written 50 years previously by a 'philosophical Christian.' On periodicals containing similar subject matter, issued by the second-generation German immigrant and dedicated Patriot Christoffel Frederik Koenig (1756–1796), see Van Goinga, 'Een blik op de praktijk van de Nederlandse boekhandel', 53.

<sup>261</sup> J.F. von Bielefeld, *Institutions politiques* (1760–1772); D.tr. *Catechismus der weeten-schappen* (1785–1794); see *VL* 1786-i, 282–289. Bielefeld was immensely popular; both the *VL* and the clerical *Boekzaal* published copious extracts from his writings.

The connection between doctrinal simplicity and the pursuit of Christian concord may be illustrated by a short treatise on Lutheran-Catholic unionism, written by the pre-eminent divine Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Jerusalem (1709–1789), whom we have already encountered several times. Jerusalem was a clergyman at Wolfenbüttel and Braunschweig, *Abt* of Mariental and Riddagshausen, and one of the outstanding theologians of his day. His *Von der Kirchenvereinigung*, published without the author's permission in 1772 and soon translated into Dutch,<sup>262</sup> was an informal communication intended for an Italian cardinal. The latter had suggested that a union of Catholic and Protestant churches best countered the threat of deism, and had advocated a renewal of the unionist dialogue pursued at the turn of the century by Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet (1627–1704). In a polite but dismissive response, Jerusalem pointed out that it would be a waste of time to 'repeat once again the *loci communes* which have already been discussed hundreds of times, and which in the end brought [the parties] no closer to each other than when they started.' He believed that the time for a true church union had not yet come. In his view, the main obstacle to union was the lack of 'simplicity' in the Roman Catholic faith. Simplicity is the essential characteristic of the Christian religion and reflects its innermost dignity. The Roman Catholic Church, however, has not only appended one additional doctrine after another, but accords them the status of fundamental truths. One need merely think of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Thus, while the history of the Christian church after the Reformation is one of increasing simplicity, Roman Catholic theology is out of step with this development. Jerusalem believed that, prior to any negotiation, the Roman Catholic Church should dispense with all additions and accretions attached to its theology.<sup>263</sup> Interestingly, Jerusalem wrote a preface to a collection of sermons by Pierre Coste, and highly valued the work of James Foster. Indeed, according to Karl Aner, Jerusalem frequented Foster's sermons during his *Bildungsreise* to London and had studied his writings closely.<sup>264</sup> An orthodox reviewer was sceptical

<sup>262</sup> D.tr. J.F.W. Jerusalem, *Bedenkingen over de kerk-vereeniging* (1774) (translator unknown); Van Eijnatten, 'The debate on religious unity'.

<sup>263</sup> Jerusalem acknowledged that the so-called Febronian system was a step in the right direction because it accorded to the Pope the status of *primus inter pares* among the bishops rather than regarding him as the infallible head of the one true church.

<sup>264</sup> Müller, *Johann Friedrich Wilhelm Jerusalem*, 209–223. Several of Foster's writings

about Jerusalem's ideas. He cautioned against Jerusalem's reduction of Christendom to belief in the divinity of the Saviour and the benefits acquired therefrom, and his continuous harping on universal love.<sup>265</sup>

Doctrinal simplicity, then, accompanied the rise of the polite public; so did an unprecedented emphasis on moral practice. Most Dutch writers agreed that it was good to pursue morality, as long as things were not overdone, as in Bahrdr's *Briefe über die Bibel im Volkston* (1782). To focus solely on doctrine and exegesis is censurable, wrote one reviewer, but surely an exclusive stress on moral practice is hardly better. Bahrdr had argued that the inward characteristics of the Gospel, those that had a bearing on the inner moral life, were the only ones that really mattered; all the rest was window dressing.<sup>266</sup> Almost as bad, at least in the eyes of the orthodox, were the ruminations of Joachim Christian Blum (1739–1790).<sup>267</sup> This German rococo poet had little use for exegesis and doctrine, which in his view were only instruments invented by the clergy to keep the people ignorant, and insisted that pulpits be used only for expounding moral rules. To confute this kind of reasoning, the *Vaderlandsche Bibliotheek* included an essay on the 'contemporary opinion that it is irrelevant what one believes as long as one lives well.' This view, remarked the writer, was hard to reconcile with the present concern to disseminate popular Enlightenment. People will become more enlightened if they are less prone to error and hold notions that are more consonant with the nature of things. How then can enlightenment of the mind be irrelevant?<sup>268</sup>

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were translated into German, among others by Spalding; a preface to one translation was written by A.F.W. Sack.

<sup>265</sup> *NB* 1774/II-i, 492–494.

<sup>266</sup> D.tr. [C.F. Bahrdr], *Brieven over den Bybel, in den smaak van een verlicht en beschaafd volk* (1783); critical reviews in *VL* 1783-i, 516–517; *VL* 1785-i, 420; *NB* 1783-i, 194–199. A later translation was called *Brieven over den bijbel in eenen gemeenzaamen stijl* (1795); critical review in *VB* 1796-i, 577–582. Even Goede found Bahrdr's approach to the Gospel somewhat unpalatable; see his annotations in Starck, *Vrijmoedige bedenkingen over het Christendom*, 16 note. Another author who exclusively emphasized 'practical Christianity' was the philosophical clergyman Johann L. Buchwitz († 1769), in his anonymous *Freythige Briefe über das Christenthum* (1769); D.tr. *Achtal van oordeelkundige en tevens vrymoedige brieven* (1774).

<sup>267</sup> J.C. Blum *Spaziergänge* (1774) and *Neue Spaziergänge* (1784); D.tr. *Sentimenteele wandelingen* (1778); a very critical review in *NB* 1780-i, 441–447. See also *NB* 1780-i, 556–561, on Blum's anticlericalism.

<sup>268</sup> *VB* 1796-ii, 625–634.



Objections to German extremes notwithstanding, the concern for the moral life met with broad approval. Practical applications of fundamental beliefs abounded. The typical periodical included essays on 'the influence of the notion of God on our happiness' and 'the influence of religion on our happiness'.<sup>269</sup> When Johannes Frederik Scheffer (1744–1808), a Dutch Lutheran preacher and Patriot, published his *First truths of the Christian religion*, a reviewer regretted that the author had left out moral issues. Only a very small number of religious truths can be made clear to children, whereas moral injunctions can be easily demonstrated.<sup>270</sup> The Society for the Good of the Public, posing the question, 'What is the true essence of Christianity?', required participants to write an essay on morality that could be read and used by Christians from all denominations; unfortunately, no-one won the gold medal.<sup>271</sup> Few writers would have denied that the pursuit of faith, love and especially virtue was the true essence of Christendom.<sup>272</sup> A small sensation was made by Franz Volkmar Reinhard (1753–1812), theology professor at Wittenberg, with the oft-reprinted *Versuch über den Plan, welchen der Stifter der christlichen Religion zum Besten der Menschheit entwarf* (1781). Jesus may have intended to establish virtue on earth and unite all men as brothers, observed a highly critical reviewer, but such aims would have been irrelevant if he had not also first atoned for the sin of mankind.<sup>273</sup> It is unlikely that this orthodox reviewer would have concurred with his colleagues of the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen*. The latter showed a pronounced preference for the writings of the Scottish Moderates, who were among the outstanding advocates of simplicity and morality. Alexander Gerard (1728–1795), theology professor at King's College, Aberdeen,

<sup>269</sup> *Algemeen Magazyn*, 1790-i, 3–7, 8–15. Many other essays in the same vein were translations of pieces by the *Popularphilosoph* Garve.

<sup>270</sup> [J.F. Scheffer] *De eerste waarheden van den Christelyken godsdienst* (1788); apparently an adaptation of J.F. Jacobi's *Die erste Lehren der christlichen Religion* (1768); *VB* 1789-i, 17.

<sup>271</sup> One contribution was published independently as *Zedekundige verhandeling over het waare weezen van het Christendom* (1791); cf. *VL* 1792-i, 136–139.

<sup>272</sup> This was the central claim made by Heinrich Christian Bergen (1747–1812), a pastor from Hessen, in *Denkwürdigkeiten aus dem Leben Jesu* (1789); D.tr. *Gedenkwaardigheden uit het openbaar leven van Jesus* (1793), with a preface by Herman Muntinghe; the book was acclaimed in *VB* 1793-i, 105–109.

<sup>273</sup> D.tr. F.V. Reinhart, *Het plan door den stichter van het Christendom ten beste der menschen ontworpen* (1787); *NB* 1787-i, 152–156. *De Recensent* II (1790), 133–147, praised Reinhart's book as an excellent result of German free inquiry, and an antidote to the Wolfenbütteler *Fragmente*.

surfaced in the periodical with an essay on the nature of true doctrine. Stressing apostolic simplicity, he contended that one universal faith underlay the various man-made theological systems. Individual Christians ought to concentrate on Christ's teachings rather than theological speculation, since the pursuit of virtue is the great end of Christian truth.<sup>274</sup>

The novelty of the twofold emphasis on doctrinal simplicity and moral practice was often enhanced by the distinction between on the one hand 'theology', which generally referred to complicated doctrines, scholastic methods and traditional formularies, and on the other hand 'religion', which referred to simple scriptural passages with an immediate bearing on practical morality. Needless to say, the distinction was predominantly derived from German authors.<sup>275</sup> It began to appear on a wide scale in the last decade of the eighteenth century, with interesting results. Laurentius Meijer (1727–1798), a moderately orthodox theology professor at Franeker (he had written against Semler), used the distinction in his address *De avertendo, quod religionum diversitas efficere possit, damno*.<sup>276</sup> The damage resulting from religious diversity, believed Meijer, was caused in particular by scepticism and indifference. Meijer pointed out that there is one true religion, subject, however, to different theological systematizations as a result of climatological and temporal variations, dissimilarities in methods of upbringing and education, changes in morality and religious zeal, and differences in the physical, temperamental and psychological make-up of people. However, if religious diversity is fortuitous, it is not bad in itself, since heresies provoke alertness.

<sup>274</sup> *VL* (1785)-ii, 317–330, 361–370.

<sup>275</sup> E.g. J.G. Rosenmüller, *Historischer Beweis in der Religion für Kinder*, 1771, 1789; D.tr. *Historisch bewys voor de waarheid van den Kristlyken godsdienst* (1792); review in *VL* 1793-i, 57–65. A 'Commentatio de discrimine theologiae et religionis' (1782) by Karl Christian Tittmann (1744–1820), one of Ernesti's pupils and theology professor at Wittenberg, was included in Herman Muntinghe ed., *Sylloge opusculorum ad doctrinam sacram pertinentium* (1790); review in *VB* 1790-i, 589–597. Willem Goede advocated Starck's *Freimüthige Betrachtungen über das Christentum*, in which the distinction was applied throughout, as well as *Was sind Religion, Theologie und Gottesdienst? Ein philosophischer Versuch* (1785), by Georg Nicolaus Brehm (1753–1811), a philosopher at Leipzig; see his preface to Starck, *Vrijmoedige overdenkingen*, I. On Semler, see Hornig, *Johann Salomo Semler*, 160–179. Gerrit Hesselink (1755–1811), who taught at the Amsterdam Mennonite (Lamist) Seminary and was deeply influenced by German theology, distinguished sharply between theology and religion; Brüsewitz, "Tot de aankweek van leeraren", 34.

<sup>276</sup> Franeker 1788; a positive review in *VB* 1789-i, 13–16.

Moreover, despite the many differences, there is unanimity with regard to fundamentals. As an established academic, Meijer was bound to conclude that peace and harmony should be pursued only with those who differed in minor details. Another relatively orthodox divine was Jodocus Heringa Ezn, who inaugurated at Utrecht in 1794 with an address *De theologiae in scholis institutione ad praesentem reipublicae christianae conditionem prudenter accomodanda*.<sup>277</sup> Heringa pleaded for an end to theological conflict and a renewal of the academic curriculum, based on an affirmation of self-evident fundamentals of faith. Biblical theology, he suggested, is characterized by ‘*accurata et vera docta simplicitas*’, in distinction to dogmatic theology, which is speculative.<sup>278</sup>

In contrast to both Meijer and Heringa, the Reformed divine Fokko Liefsting (1747–1824) was a zealous follower of the German new reformers, and for this reason published most of his writings anonymously. He based his *Thoughts on the correct treatment of several prominent doctrines of the Reformed Church, and their use in governing the inner life* (1795) on the distinction between theology and religion.<sup>279</sup> Liefsting observed that the majority of Reformed preachers still clung to outdated traditions, while enlightened voices in the church were immediately silenced. The Synod of Dort had been a rather emotional affair, which had defined doctrines far too rigidly. Given the general contemporary enlightenment, Christians could not be expected to accept everything their fathers believed. To be an orthodox Calvinist is not to maintain the canonized faith strictly, but to embrace it with moderation according to the progress made in theology. Liefsting went on to point out that the doctrines contained in the formularies were only germane insofar as they fostered moral practice. There was no need to teach the whys and wherefores of predestination to the common people. Such doctrines were a matter of theology, to

<sup>277</sup> Utrecht 1794; review in *VL* 1795-i, 322–326.

<sup>278</sup> See also De Groot, ‘Het vroegnegentiende-eeuwse Protestantisme’, 18–19. For the (especially German) background, see Reventlow, ‘Bibelexegese als Aufklärung’.

<sup>279</sup> [F. Liefsting], *Gedachten over de rechte behandeling van eenige voornaame leerstukken van de gereformeerde kerk* (1795); *VL* 1796-i, 4–10; *VB* 1796-i, 337–347, praised Liefsting for showing the Reformed Church to her best advantage, and compared his book to one of Van Hamelveld’s moral weeklies. Liefsting was brazen enough to contribute to *PGVCG* (1793) with a treatise (using the motto: ‘*In necessariis unitas, in non nec libertas, in omnibus prudentia et charitas*’), ostensibly defending the satisfaction of Christ but actually adapting it.

be pondered upon by clever divines, and quite irrelevant to salvation.

Liefsting was a typical result of the theological renewal introduced from Germany. This renewal, which changed the face of Dutch theology, was reflected in the spate of ambiguous apologies for Christianity, the contextual and critical approach to biblical sources, the call for an impartial handling of historical sources, the legal and moral attack on subscription, and the twofold emphasis on doctrinal simplicity and moral practice. In this way, the intellectual basis of the religious public was gradually transformed. A further requirement of the new public, if politeness was to become a viable alternative to authoritarian control, was a more or less widespread dissemination of its moral assumptions. The polite public had to be populated by citizens who voluntarily acknowledged its legitimacy and were able to respond to its demands. To these assumptions we shall now address ourselves.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### QUALITIES OF THE POLITE CHRISTIAN

#### INTRODUCTION: SINCERITY AND CHANGE

The polite public, which developed rapidly after the 1760s, may be defined primarily by the Christian ‘civilization’ or *beschaving* of its members; it manifested itself in a plurality of beliefs and denominations. It premised the general good of the people on freedom, equality and open debate, rather than the outward institutional defence of confessional truths. Instead of being the recipient of established doctrine, the Christian had become a citizen whose creative participation in society if not in politics was mandatory, and whose inward convictions, regardless of their specific doctrinal contents, had become the moral basis on which that society rested. Society, however, was not helped by private convictions alone. To further the cause of truth and civilization, citizens were expected, and had to be able, to state publicly their religious views. Candour, therefore, was an essential requirement of the polite public. Section 7.1 is devoted to this novel emphasis on openness and sincerity, on the ‘publicness’, as it were, of inward faith. Particular attention will be given to the contribution of novels in developing an ethic of sincerity. The sections which follow examine other aspects of the polite public’s ethic. Sociability and literary communication may be seen as organisational preconditions for the existence as such of the polite public (7.2). The next section treats the criticism and suggestions for religious reform discussed in several moral weeklies, illustrating the kind of debates with which the polite public identified (7.3). The new public’s twofold alternative to authoritarian control as a means of bringing about intellectual community—reasonableness and piety—are examined in two subsequent sections (7.4 and 7.5). Section 7.6 will deal with ideas concerning education, as another of the polite public’s primary means to disseminate its moral standards. A final section is devoted to late eighteenth-century discussions concerning the principled recognition of religious plurality, illustrating the end result of a century of often intense debate on toleration (7.7).

## 7.1 IN PRAISE OF CANDOUR

Under the confessional hegemony of the Old Regime, open manifestations of religious dissent were infrequent. The safer methods of expressing dissent were familiar to most eighteenth-century authors—anonymous or pseudonymous publications, oral communication, and elaborate rhetorical methods of disguise and ambiguity. Eighteenth-century texts abound in irony, double meanings, literary tricks, and outright hoaxes. It is not without reason that the orthodox defenders of established churches throughout Europe often seem inordinately suspicious, even paranoid, in their attempts to unravel and ‘uncover’ (*ontdekken*) the real intentions of those whom they knew or supposed to be their adversaries. They lived in an age in which few critical thinkers were not proficient in the art of dissembling. Deists or atheists were adept at ‘lying theologically’, making radical claims by couching them in professedly theological and seemingly pious terms.<sup>1</sup> In a letter to the publisher Prosper Marchand, written in 1720, Jean-Alphonse Turretini reproved his correspondent for using this ‘third way’, by which he meant the use of equivocal terms.<sup>2</sup> Apparently, Marchand deemed it wise and permissible to be insincere when speaking in public. To denounce irreligious or otherwise subversive works insincerely was a way of avoiding official reprimands or persecution, while bringing such works to the attention of the public. Gauging the extent to which men of learning deviated from the accepted standards of truth is notoriously difficult. Even in personal letters—which were often one step removed from public announcements—scholars followed a strategy of dissimulation, feigning their ignorance of and opposition to dangerous tracts like the *Traité des trois imposteurs*, and tentatively trying to assess the *real* views of their correspondents. In private correspondence they still denounced improper books as *nefandus* and *pestilens*, while in fact they may have read them with pleasure.<sup>3</sup>

The confessional public sphere itself fostered ambiguity, if only because the benefits accruing from nominal endorsement of the reli-

<sup>1</sup> Berman, ‘Hume and Collins’; Berman, ‘Disclaimers as offence mechanisms’.

<sup>2</sup> Laursen, ‘Impostors and liars’, 81.

<sup>3</sup> Mulsow, ‘Freethinking in early eighteenth-century Protestant Germany’, 194, on the erudites’ ‘complex web of pretence and concealment, none of them ever knowing how far another might go to reveal his personal opinion on matters heterodox’.

gious establishment were attractive enough to guarantee outward acquiescence.<sup>4</sup> In the later eighteenth century (if not earlier), rumour had it that the wealthier Mennonites took on the Reformed faith for the sake of obtaining political power. ‘Pilfered’ (*gemoffeld*) was the term generally used to describe the way in which the less principled well-to-do were buttered up by the public church. In these cases—when confessors were rich and influential—Reformed ministers apparently avoided asking pointed questions on matters of doctrine.<sup>5</sup> Then there was the question of persecution. As an independent intellectual, literally a *freethinker*, Johann Christian Edelmann could afford to read Spinoza and develop a thoroughly radical theology, even if he was hounded by the clergy and had his writings burnt publicly at Frankfurt. Is it surprising that the academic Reimarus, who authored the Wolfenbütteler *Fragmente*, shared his secret with virtually nobody until the day he died?<sup>6</sup> In the Old Regime, duplicity was of the order of the day. Hence the frustration of idealists who were prepared to sacrifice incomes, careers and glory to the cause of religious dissent. Jean le Clerc’s essay *Contra indifferentiam religionum* (1724), appended to Grotius’ *De veritate religionis Christianae*, contained a spirited plea for sincerity that was evidently inspired by personal aggravation. Attempting to talk Nicodemists into showing their true colours, he argued that indifference to the confession to which one claims to adhere is inadmissible.

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<sup>4</sup> On the related issue of the ‘beneficial lie’, which was the subject of a controversy surrounding the Huguenot Jacques Saurin in the 1720s, see Laursen, ‘Beneficial lies’. A lie perpetrated for the benefit of others could be seen as a justification of ‘Nicodemism’ or insincere subscription. The Saurin affair had repercussions as late as 1776; cf. *Noodige waarschouwing aan de lezers van de Nederlandsche Bibliotheek, aangaande twee plaatsen uit Saurin’s predikatie over het koopen der waarheid* (1776). Cf. also J.L. Mosheim, *Mengelwerk [Miscellany]* (1780); review in *NB* 1782-i, 74–79; Mosheim believed falsehoods to be admissible if they furthered the good or prevented worse evils; the reviewer also mentioned J.D. Michaelis, *Von der Verpflichtung der Menschen die Wahrheit zu reden* (1773). See also *VL* 1769-ii, 1–7, 45–58: ‘Essay on the character, extent and binding nature of the obligation to speak the truth’, by ‘G.V.’ [Willem de Vos]. The *Legatum Stopljanum* in 1782 published prize essays related to the issue of popular deception and beneficial lies; participants were required to respond to the contention that ‘the Christian moral code does not prescribe any obligation which prevents citizens from promoting their own interests or contradict the administration of the commonwealth.’

<sup>5</sup> Hartog, *De spectatoriale geschriften van 1741–1800*, 231–232; an essay on these ‘moffelaars’ in *De Denker* V (1768), 105–120, with a sharp condemnation of hypocrisy and insincerity.

<sup>6</sup> Grossmann, ‘Edelmann und das “öffentliche Schweigen”’.



The polite public sphere put an end to the need for elaborate instruments of artifice. By the 1760s, sincerity had become the pre-eminent catch-word used to justify freedom of religious expression.<sup>7</sup> This applies even to German authors like Töllner, who, as we saw, asserted that clerical critics should express views that were at variance with the confession to which they had pledged themselves; he required them to be sincere in their insincerity, as it were. In general, the honest and errant doubter now represented a higher moral worth than the arrogant and intolerant churchman. One of several Dutch words representing the English 'sincere' or 'candid' is *ongeveinsd*. The word appeared throughout the century in a great variety of texts, together with its antonym *geveinsd*, meaning 'insincere' or 'dissimulated'. The word *ongeveinsd* was often used by pietist devotional writers to refer to believers whose salvific state reflected true conversion, in contrast to the unregenerate or *geveinsden* who only acted as if they had seen the light. Pietists themselves were commonly accused of insincerity and hypocrisy.<sup>8</sup> A late eighteenth-century writer typically associated pietism with sanctimonious behaviour, which represented a danger to society since it set greater store by arbitrary inward sensation than the exercise of virtue—and the French Revolution showed where enthusiasm led. Pietists emulated each other to confirm their membership of a social group considered spiritually elite; they made certain regularly to experience or give vent to 'anxieties, hellish pains, torments of the soul, despair, moments of anguish, deep sighs, unintelligible words, and joyful calms.'<sup>9</sup> Spiritual snobbery was the worst form of hypocrisy.

Towards the end of the century, sincere Christians had come to denote believers who were familiar with the value of liberty and able to appreciate it rationally, and whose merit as citizens depended on the extent to which they revealed their inner convictions. Van Hamelsveld, for instance, issued a periodical called *The sincere Christian* between 1797 and 1804.<sup>10</sup> The term *openhartig* was used early in the

<sup>7</sup> For the English context, cf. Saunders, 'The state as highwayman'.

<sup>8</sup> E.g. Nicolaas Hartman, *De ongevinsde Christen in zyn geloof en wandel beknoptelik afgeschest* [*The faith and conduct of the sincere Christian briefly portrayed*] (1727; 5th ed. 1745). Cf. *NB* 1775-ii, 257–260, on the distinction between enthusiasm and dissimulation. Hypocrisy (*huichelarij*) is a related term; cf. F.A. Lampe, *Vijf leerredenen over de huichelarij* (1773); according to *VL* 1773-i, 544–545, an excellent remedy against 'one of the most awful vices.'

<sup>9</sup> *De Godsdienstvriend*, I, 3–4.

<sup>10</sup> IJ. van Hamelsveld ed., *De ongevinsde christen* (1797–1804).

century to signal a forthright declaration of disputed opinions;<sup>11</sup> in later years it was the *sine qua non* of informed public debate.<sup>12</sup> ‘Cultus Deorum est, ut eos semper pura, integra, incorrupta & mente & voce veneremur,’ a contemporary cited Cicero. An honest man does not dissemble. Should he believe that there is only one fundamental article (to wit, that Jesus is the Christ), he must simply establish a new church.<sup>13</sup> Ministers wrote sermons on sincerity,<sup>14</sup> periodicals published essays on sincerity and Nicodemism,<sup>15</sup> the omnipresent German divines argued that sincerity was central to religion,<sup>16</sup> and radical essayists claimed, in Töllner’s vein, that prudent reticence in discussing religious truths was not the same as hypocrisy.<sup>17</sup> Sincerity was a potent weapon in influencing public opinion. In most religious disputes, observed one spectator, the supporters of a particular doctrine did not actually believe in the truths for which they persecuted others. The latter were not persecuted for not believing, but for not keeping up appearances, and for seeming to be more knowledgeable than those who did conform. Apparently, the clergy permitted one to reject religion freely and live licentiously, as long as one maintained outwardly the most complex and obscure doctrines.<sup>18</sup>

Another moral weekly provided an account of the religious education of a young man, by whom the writer evidently meant a

<sup>11</sup> Jacob F. van Daverveld, *De eenvoudige en oprechte waarheid. Ontdekt in een samenspraak tusschen een roomsgezinde, een gereformeerde, en openhartige vrygeest* [*The simple and candid truth. Unveiled in a conversation between a Catholic, a Calvinist, and a sincere deist*] (1733). Van Daverveld (1685–1759) was an orthodox Reformed minister.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *De openhartige. Een volksblad tot nut en vermaak voor alle standen* [*The Candid [Person or Medium]. A popular magazine for the use and pleasure of all classes*] [1814] (one instalment only).

<sup>13</sup> *De Denker* VII (1770), 145–168 and 281–304 (Cicero at 153); under the motto ‘in necessarias unitas, in non necessarias libertas’, the writer claimed that the Hobbesian-Lockean principle was the best basis for a comprehensive church.

<sup>14</sup> J. Stapfer, *Een dertigtal van predikationen* (1768), included a sermon ‘on sincerity in religion’.

<sup>15</sup> *VL* 1769-ii, 537–541, with an essay entitled ‘Honesty [*braafheid*] cannot be trusted if separated from religion.’ *Nieuw Evangelisch Magazijn* I-ii (1780) contained four proposals regarding sincerity, while II-i (1781) included a translation of an essay by August Hermann Francke entitled *Nikodemus*.

<sup>16</sup> Spalding in J. Petsch ed., *Proeven van den tegenwoordigen smaak der Hoogduitschers*, part III.

<sup>17</sup> In the *Godgeleerde, wysgeerige en zedenkundige mengelingen* [*Theological, philosophical and moral miscellany*] (1792); reviews in *VL* 1793-i, 561–565 and *Recensent* III (1792), 517–519. The collection, which was critical of the clergy, also contained contributions on prejudice, the errors of the early Christians, sincerity, and the notion of brotherhood in the New Testament.

<sup>18</sup> *De Rhapsodist* III (1773), 137–147.

Reformed youth with good prospects in the country's administration. Since the various denominations each stake a claim to truth, the youth should be allowed to find his own way, not by studying his church's doctrine, but by learning to exercise his reason. He should learn about natural theology and subsequently examine the Scriptures. Having completed his studies, he will find out, first, that he is a Protestant, and secondly, that he does not agree completely with any particular denomination. What must he then do? Should he refuse to bind himself to a confession and expose himself to hatred and persecution? Or should he dissemble, and debase himself? He can do neither. He will be condemned to remain on his own, until the day when wisdom and forbearance rule the minds and hearts of the ministers and the people, and Christians are again united.<sup>19</sup> One 'Irenophilus Orthodoxus' later argued that there was, in fact, only one way to keep the Reformed Church so pure that formularies were confessed, signed, and taught without concealment, equivocation, or hypocrisy. The solution was political, namely, to open public offices to all citizens, regardless of their religious views. It is a fact, claimed the author, that many prominent people—magistrates and high-ranking civil servants—could not be bothered less about traditional orthodoxy, and that the Arminian 'heresy of Toleration' flourished among them. If such people were freely permitted to join the Remonstrants, Mennonites, 'or other Tolerants', there would be no need for the clergy to condemn their brothers. The church would be pure, and peace would reign.<sup>20</sup>

The *Clergy's moralist*, one of the influential moral weeklies of the 1750s, published an extensive essay on concealing one's opinions. Truth, claimed the author, is the most important means of furthering the general good of church and state, since it comprises the basis for knowledge, judgement, action, peace, concord, well-being, piety, and holiness. Where truth is lacking, there will be ignorance, discord, mutiny, passion, lies, wickedness, vice, and irreligion. By way of example, the author referred to clergymen who held Bekkerian sympathies but continuously discussed the devil in the pulpit, or who inwardly denied predestination but defended the doctrine at every opportunity. Defending religious views to which one was inwardly opposed was despicable. Dissemblance was brought about by fear,

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<sup>19</sup> *De Denker* IV (1767), 121–128, 137–144.

<sup>20</sup> *De Denker* IV (1767), 369–376.

indolence, attachment to possessions, ambition and social concerns. The author did introduce one caveat; if prudence required one to be reticent, one should not sacrifice one's personal safety to a principle.<sup>21</sup> Sincerity also surfaced in orthodox discourse. Dissatisfied with the way Reformed 'Tolerants' treated subscription with contempt, the orthodox acclaimed books such as Johann F. Stapfer's *Unterricht von dem Eide* (1779). The disdain for oaths and the unbridled practice of perjury made the Dutch worthy of God's judgements, concluded the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek*, which subsequently published an essay denouncing lies.<sup>22</sup> Jurists and opinion makers heartily agreed.<sup>23</sup> As Vernet argued, the sincerity enabled by the full toleration of religious beliefs is a prerequisite for the exercise of civil virtue, and therefore a necessary condition for the well-being of the state.<sup>24</sup>

Commendations of candour required an anthropology rejecting spiritual submission to authority. A moral weekly called *The Philosopher* argued in 1767 that

our manner of thinking depends in such a way on our Physical Constitution, Upbringing, Place of Birth, Profession, and a hundred other peculiarities beyond our power, that one can freely state that the universal Father of Humanity has wisely intended and ordained his Children, to be affected by the same things in different ways, and view similar matters in different ways.

What we think is not important; what counts is the state of our heart. As long as the Gospel spirit of general benevolence and love for humanity guides our actions, we will be able to live in peace with our fellow Christians. Jesus commanded us to act amicably, charitably and gently towards each other. By following his injunction, the early Christians were able to preserve unity and peace in spite of their differences. How far removed from such moral excellence are the clergy of today! The latter regard pleas for mutual forbearance

<sup>21</sup> *Zeedemeester der kerkekyken*, 385–392.

<sup>22</sup> D.tr. J.F. Stapfer, *Onderrigt omtrent het eedzweeren* (1779); review in *NB* 1780-i, 258–261. The essay in *NB* 1784-ii, 389–406, was translated from the *Traité de l'excellence de la religion* (1714) by Le Clerc's nephew Jacques Bernard (1658–1718), a Huguenot preacher who became a philosophy professor at Leiden.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. an essay by an anonymous jurist on the need to speak the truth in *Hollands magazyn*, I (1750–1751), 85–104; an essay on speaking the truth in *Zeedemeester der kerkekyken*, 89–96; an essay by 'B.' on sincerity and frankness in *Algemeen Magazyn*, 1787-i, 26–39.

<sup>24</sup> J. Vernet, *Betrachtungen über die Sitten der Religion und des öffentlichen Gottesdienst* (1769); D.tr. *Aanmerkingen over het bederf der hedendaagsche zeden* (1770).

as appeals to indifference. If sincerity leads to all kinds of errors, so be it. Religious errors never hurt anybody, whereas suppression of free inquiry leads only to stupidity, superstition, bitterness, anger, and the corruption of sociability and virtue.<sup>25</sup>

Novels, too, made an issue out of sincerity. One of the more contentious was Friedrich Nicolai's *Das Leben und die Meinungen des Herrn Magister Sebalduß Nothanker* (1773).<sup>26</sup> Schultens relates that his clerical colleagues at the local classis lodged complaints against it during the session on licentious publications, and that the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen* was berated for having praised the book as useful. Nevertheless, they did not deem it worthwhile formally to attempt having the book prohibited.<sup>27</sup> The novel was merciless in its treatment of Dutch Calvinist divines, whose reputation in Berlin had already been devastated by the Socratic War. In the novel, a sincere but simple country pastor called Sebalduß Nothanker is persecuted by hypocrite orthodox Lutherans on account of his heterodox views. In the third volume, after the hero has been shipwrecked off the Dutch coast, and offered a position as governor to the children of a merchant in Rotterdam, the Dutch clergy add to Nothanker's misfortunes. The episode afforded Nicolai an excellent opportunity to castigate Petrus Hofstede and his circle. The reviewer in the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* was livid. It was clearly the author's purpose to defend libertinism in its worst forms, eroticism, whoredom, elopement, murder, cursing, blasphemy, and other shameless things. As a novel, the book violated the rules of literary probability. The clergy, moreover, were depicted as a bunch of drunkards and disgraceful opportunists, and the formularies dragged through the mud. The author denied doctrines concerning original sin, the atonement, and eternal punishment. To crown it all, the translator (who later proved to be Van der Meersch) was so brazen as to apply the idiotic characters in the novel to the Dutch clergy, implying that Calvinist preachers were fools and deceivers.<sup>28</sup> After the third volume appeared, the publisher

<sup>25</sup> *De Philosoph II* (1767), 209–216.

<sup>26</sup> D.tr. [F. Nicolai], *Het leven en de gevoelens van den eerwaarden heer Sebalduß Nothanker* (1775–1776).

<sup>27</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 11 (letter to Van Goens, undated, prob. 1777).

<sup>28</sup> *NB* 1776-i, 154–165. Van der Meersch wrote a biting foreword to the novel and added a number of annotations. Another translation of *Nothanker* had been begun by a certain Faber, originally a Frisian and a strong supporter of Van der Marck, who later became the director of a school in Pfalz-Zweibrücken; Lindeboom, *Frederik Adolf van der Marck*, 129–131.

Jan Döll was warned by the Amsterdam magistrate that he would be banished from the city if he continued his enterprise.<sup>29</sup>

In his preface, Van der Meersch spoke plainly. He railed against subscription as a poor excuse for not inquiring into the Bible and as the best means of making a career as *Consistorialrat*, censor, or professor. The orthodox, he continued, are one of three kinds. They are either stupid, putting their faith wholly in the wisdom of their ancestors; or they are critical but ambitious, glossing over doctrinal problems in the name of honour and fortune; or they are utterly indifferent, which makes them all the more orthodox because their careers depend on maintaining the religion that happens to be the dominant one. Van der Meersch did not make things any better in his annotations. Among other things, he ridiculed the Dutch clergy's periwigs and preaching habits.<sup>30</sup> Incidentally, the life of the sincere, simple Sebaldu was not the only German novel modelled after Laurence Sterne's rambling *Life and opinions of Tristram Shandy*. In 1778–1779 Thomas Amory's *The life of John Buncke, Esq.* appeared in Dutch, following Nicolai's German edition of 1778. The *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* considered the book, which had pronounced deist tendencies, to be even more offensive than *Sebaldu Nothanker*, and called for a ban on the book. Its sale was forbidden in Holland in June 1779.<sup>31</sup>

These were controversial novels, written by foreigners beyond the arm of the Dutch law. Domestic novelists tended to be a great deal more careful. They knew from experience that to risk having their books forbidden was as counter-productive as ignoring the middling taste of a circumscribed reading public. It took some time before the best Dutch novelist of the eighteenth century learnt the disagreeable lesson that a balance had to be sought between commerce, criticism, and the public. Betje Wolff née Bekker (1738–1804) began her career as the scourge of the contemporary clerical scene. She was as sharp-witted as she was sharp-tongued, well-read, talented, and hot-tempered; she was not to be bullied into submission, and she was female to boot. As a seventeen-year-old, Betje Bekker had the gall to elope with a soldier and the indecency to return home without him. She

<sup>29</sup> *Jongeneelen* no. 121.

<sup>30</sup> [Nicolai], *Sebaldu Nothanker*, I, preface; II, 91 note, 208 note.

<sup>31</sup> [T. Amory], *Het leven, de aanmerkingen en gevoelens van Johan Bonkel* (1778), tr. and published by J.H. Munnikhuizen, a Lutheran minister who was suspended in 1774 and subsequently resigned to become a lawyer; *NB* 1779-i, 241–252; *Jongeneelen* no. 129.

was subsequently fortunate enough to marry an elderly minister (she was 21, and he 52) who admired her intellect, magnanimously forgave her her youthful fling, and enabled her to develop her talents as a poet and a writer. Rescued from disgrace and spinsterhood, Betje Bekker was now condemned to spend her life in an obscure parsonage as the spouse of an inconspicuous minister whose main quality seemed to be his willingness to live a Platonic conjugal life. Luckily, he was also blessed with three sisters who had been married off to noteworthy men. With these husbands, Betje Wolff often made pleasant conversation: Jan Engelman (1710–1782), a Wolffian mostly remembered for his attempt to point out the grandeur of God in snow-flakes, and an incorrigible champion of the *mundus optimus* despite his chronic toothaches; Ewald Hollebeek (1719–1796), the Leiden professor of theology known for his lenient views; and Anthonie Kist (1722–1794), a Reformed minister. Betje Wolff also befriended the aged lawyer Herman Noordkerk, Deurhoff's defender, who supported her studies by putting his enormous library at her disposal. In the library of her husband's parsonage, she pored over, among others, Leibniz, Wolff, Derham, Nieuwentyt, Formey, Clarke, Brandt, and Tillotson.<sup>32</sup> Another close acquaintance was Cornelis Loosjes (1723–1792), 'the Socinian Mennonite', as she called him,<sup>33</sup> the man who had baptized the apostate Anthonie van der Os. Betje Wolff's relationship with Loosjes resulted in positive reviews of her work in the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen*, a sympathetic attitude which did not extend to her husband Adriaan Wolff (1707–1777). The latter had written an irenical book that wholly failed to live up to the reviewer's expectations.<sup>34</sup> Wolff was a conservative, if broad-minded, country pastor. His wife nonetheless seems to have respected his religious views; she did, after all, owe him a lot.

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<sup>32</sup> Buijnsters, *Wolff & Deken*, 69; Wolff's novels are also treated in Van der Wall, 'Religious pluralism'.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Briefwisseling van Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken*, 189.

<sup>34</sup> Wolff wrote an apology for the Christian faith dedicated to peace and freedom: A. Wolff, *De Christen godsdienst alleen uit Jesus getuigenissen en bevelen aangewezen* [*The Christian religion depicted solely by Jesus' testimonies and commands*] (1770); review in *VL* 1771-i, 192–194. In 1772 Adrian Wolff had published an official commemorative sermon on the freedom of religion enjoyed in northern Holland since 1572. The sermon extended towards all Protestant denominations, since all had suffered under the Inquisition, but also sympathized with Catholics who had contributed to the Dutch revolt; *Redevoering over de vryheid van godsdienst in West-Vriesland, Kennemerland en Waterland* [1772].

Socially and intellectually, then, Betje Wolff was in an excellent position to share her views on religion, the church, theology, and freedom with persons of no uncertain standing. She gradually developed into an eloquent busybody and irritating critic of much of what the Reformed clergy stood for. Her fame as a poet was established in the late 1760s, in the midst of the Socratic War. Betje Wolff worked hard to become an intimate of the patrician republican Petrus Burman Jr. She was not very successful, for she embarrassed Burman by publishing a poem with the imprudent title *The unchangeable Santhorst confession* (1772). In this parody, later canonized by nineteenth-century anticlerical liberals, she depicted the goings-on at Santhorst as a political version of a Collegiant meeting. Clerical domination was out of the question here, and all members, including women, were free to speak aloud. Burman, anxious not to lose the Prince's favour, dropped the minister's all-too-spirited wife like a red-hot coal. Betje Wolff's reputation as a 'Tolerant' critic was now fully established—and, given the contents of the *Santhorst confession*, justifiably so. Apart from acrid comments on clerical demagogues and the dull-witted multitudes who followed them, Betje, who is not remembered for her subtlety when it came down to Dort, enumerated the 'five articles' of Santhorst. (1) Members of the Santhorst 'church of peace' worship an excellent Being called Freedom; those who defend despotism will be excommunicated. (2) The members pledge loyalty to the Fatherland; those who oppose patriotism are heretics. (3) 'Tolerants' respect the gentle laws of mutual forbearance. (4) Members love and serve Friendship. (5) Members pursue what is best. The holy saints venerated at Santhorst included a number of States-oriented *regenten*, such as Grotius and Bynkershoek, and a certain 'Speaker of Truth' (*Waarmond*) who had disputed the divine right of the church—clearly none other than Daniel van Alphen.<sup>35</sup> Critics interpreted Wolff's incautious diatribe against the clergy as an attempt by a bunch of decadent libertines to undermine the Reformed Church.<sup>36</sup> While this

<sup>35</sup> E. Wolff-Bekker, *De onveranderlyke Santhorstsche geloofsbelydenis* [1772], 22; a copy at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, shelf number XN 00420, contains annotations by a contemporary who at this point refers to Van Alphen.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. [Anon.], *De veel veranderde Santhorstische Geloofsbelydenis* [*The often-changed Santhorst confession*] (s.a.), 5; similarly *De vaderen des vaderlands verdedigt tegen de lasteryke Zanthorstische geloofsbelydenis* [*The fathers of the fatherland defended against the slanderous Santhorst confession*] (s.a.), by a 'lover of truth, religion, peace and freedom'. An *Apologie, of verdediging en ontschuldiging van het dichtstukje genaamd, de Santhorstische geloofs-belydenis* [*Apology* (. . .)]



seems an appropriate enough description of the Santhorst circle, it was not, of course, something a preacher's wife ought to have been accused of.

Suspicious concerning Betje Wolff's orthodoxy were not new. She had recently translated *An essay on the life of Jesus Christ* (1767) by the Scottish minister William Craig (1709–1784), a 'Moderate' divine at Glasgow.<sup>37</sup> Her aim was apparently to convince a freethinking disciple of Voltaire of the truth of the Gospel,<sup>38</sup> but the way she did this laid her open to criticism. Craig's intention, she observed, was to demonstrate that Jesus Christ was God's emissary, neither more nor less. Craig should not be suspected of heterodoxy because he failed to discuss certain doctrines. Anyone convinced that Christ was sent by God, regardless of the divine ambassador's metaphysical qualities, will accept that his teachings are divine, and, consequently, that the Christian religion is true. Many of those who inquire into the Bible neglect everything that is clear and simple. They receive or fabricate complex, incomprehensible systems, which have little to do with Christianity and lead only to strife and schism. How simple was the article of faith professed by the apostles, to wit, that Jesus was God's only son and the redeemer of the world!<sup>39</sup> Because of this preface, which clearly reflected the theology of radical dissent which had previously surfaced in Coste, Foster, Stinstra, and many others, Betje was charged with Socinianism. The accusation does not seem to have bothered her, although she did her best to ward off suspicions.<sup>40</sup> In any case, Betje Wolff's reputation was thoroughly demolished among the orthodox in 1772 when she published the *Menuet and the minister's wig*, a satire on a ludicrous affair at Groningen where

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for the Santhorst confession] (s.a.), 4–6, commended the plea for political and religious forbearance as a means for achieving concord among the citizens of a state. A *Brief over de Santhorstsche geloofsbelijdenis* [Letter on (. . .)] (1772), 10, regarded the article on forbearance as a plea for restoring the unity of the Reformed Church as it had existed before 1619.

<sup>37</sup> D.tr. W. Craig, *Het leven van Jezus Christus* (1770).

<sup>38</sup> Buijnsters ed., *Briefwisseling van Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken*, 124.

<sup>39</sup> Craig, *Het leven van Jezus Christus*, III–XVI. Betje Wolff tended to mention Foster in one breath with Helvétius and Locke. In 1774 she read a passage from Foster's *Essay on fundamentals, with a particular regard to the doctrine of the over-blessed Trinity* (1720) out loud to a friend, who responded with the lament that freedom of the press in England was so much greater than in the Netherlands. *Briefwisseling van Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken*, 232.

<sup>40</sup> *Briefwisseling van Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken*, 133–134, on account of her preface ('my confession of faith') in Craig, *Het leven van Jezus Christus* (1770).

the church council called an elder to task for dancing at his daughter's wedding. At this point Betje Wolff observed that she had acquired the reputation of being 'a foul disgrace to the Reformed Church.'<sup>41</sup>

In 1777, after the death of her husband, Betje Wolff began to collaborate with her close friend Agatha (Aagje) Deken (1741–1804), who had also acquired a reputation as a poetess. Deken had been brought up among the Collegiants and her religiosity must have appealed to Wolff—who, indeed, left the Reformed Church in 1779.<sup>42</sup> Her views on religion became more practical. In the *Letters on diverse subjects* (1780–1781), Wolff and Deken included a lengthy communication supposedly written by a pious and orthodox member of the Reformed Church in reply to her friend, a Collegiant supporter of 'unlimited forbearance'. The latter had wondered why the adherents to the Reformed Church were so obstinate, harsh and intolerant in excluding those who did not subscribe to their doctrines. The answer provided by the pious Calvinist is a worthy one. 'How!' she cries out, 'Is it my doing, is it in my control, that I happen to believe that I must accept a whole Chain of Formularies and Articles if I desire salvation?' In other words, orthodox Calvinists rejected Collegiants not out of callousness, but for conscience's sake. Their position, explains the pious Calvinist, follows from a sincerely held conviction and should consequently be distinguished from the insensitive and coarse fanaticism of 'that large number of stupid hot-heads' who defend what they consider to be orthodoxy. Thus, to exclude certain people from the Lord's Supper is not to persecute them. At a later point in the letter the impersonation of the pious Calvinist is ended. 'Until now, my dear friend, I have written as a Member of the Public Church'; henceforth, the writer cryptically observes, she will write as a 'Member of the Church to which I belong, and which favours a very general form of Forbearance.' This kind of forbearance requires us not to make an issue of the fact that some people exclude us from communion. We should simply pity their narrow-mindedness and lament their infatuation with a doctrine that

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<sup>41</sup> *Aan mynen geest [To my mind]* (1774). The *NB* 1774/II-i, 403–415, condescended to review the poem and concluded that it was only a malicious plea for toleration.

<sup>42</sup> Both writers adhered to the Patriot party during the 1780s. After the Orangist regime was restored, Wolff and Deken no longer felt at home in the Republic and left for Trévoux in the south of France, where they stayed until 1797, when the political tide in the Netherlands turned. They died in 1804, within nine days of each other.

prevents them from following the natural inclination of the heart, knowing that they will share with us in the future state of perfection.<sup>43</sup>

This letter reveals the basic religious position of the mature Betje Wolff. If sincere people insist on subscribing to certain confessions, they must be allowed to do so. It is a stage that has to be passed through before the true church 'to which I belong' will flower. This is the view defended also in the *History of Miss Sara Burgerhart* (1782), practically the only eighteenth-century Dutch novel still read with some regularity. Apparently, the sharp-tongued Wolff had finally learnt the golden rule of Dutch publicity: authors cannot afford radicalism. A bestseller, *Sara Burgerhart* was even published as *Sara Reinhart* (1796) by Nicolai. In this epistolary novel of 175 letters divided over 800 pages, Sara's bourgeois world of virtuous Christendom is contrasted with, on the one hand, the despicable *fijnen*, presented as an isolated group of pious narcissists, and on the other the *savants* and *esprits forts*, who are no less odious. As far as its religious message is concerned, the novel is a plea for reasonable piety. Only one of the characters, the pious evangelical Styntje Doorzicht ('Constance Discernment'), is able to communicate with conceited pietists, but even she denounces the hypocrisy she encounters among them. Styntje represents the devout side of orthodox evangelicalism (we shall come back to her later), while the reverend Redelyk ('Reasonable') personifies the rational side. This Lutheran minister is broad-minded and lenient, generously approving of mixed marriages between Lutherans and Calvinists and favouring the 'illusion that all Protestants will once upon a time be united.' Religious concord is an illusion because the forces of prejudice are too strong, the personal interests of believers too various, and popular ideas concerning religion too foolish. As long as teachers of the Gospel do not emphasize virtue more strongly than doctrine, and continue to brand moderate preachers as false brothers and shameful indifferentists, dissension among Christians will persist.<sup>44</sup> Other sympathetic characters in the novel make similar claims. Abraham Blankaart (literally 'Abraham of innocent character'), confronted with an obstinate orthodox Lutheran, slams his hand on the table, crying: 'Listen, Paul is my man. What did he

<sup>43</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Brieven over verscheiden onderwerpen*, II, 230–296.

<sup>44</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Historie van Mejuffrouw Sara Burgerhart* (1782), Letters 109 and 120.

say? *Search the Scriptures.*<sup>45</sup> Blankaart continues this with an harangue against the popular readiness to accept doctrine on clerical authority. Elsewhere he states his desire to hear biblical or practical preaching, rather than useless exegesis, and relates that he listened to an excellent Mennonite sermon the other day.<sup>46</sup>

The religious message Wolff and Deken were trying to get across in their novels is less innocuous than has been suggested. It subverted the confessional public sphere and supplanted it with the idea of an open, polite, and organized Protestant communion.<sup>47</sup> If the authors appealed to sincere piety, they did not appeal to orthodoxy. And if their appeal to piety was sincere (which no doubt it was), it also drove home the moral superiority of 'reasonable Christians'<sup>48</sup> over orthodox dogmatists and doleful pietists. The ideal that Wolff and her friend portrayed in their novels was an active, pious and joyful Christendom within the confines of a broad institutional church but unconnected with particular confessional leanings. In an apologetic sequel to *Sara Burgerhart* called *The letters of Abraham Blankaart* (1787–1789), the hero is portrayed as wandering through Amsterdam on a lovely winter Sunday. Visiting the various churches, he rejoices over the fact that the word 'heretic' is seldom used in the Reformed Churches he passes by. He sees no differences between the Reformed and Lutheran churches. He regards with equanimity the right- and left-wing Mennonites and the Quakers. His heart reaches out to his Remonstrant brothers. He values the Herrnhuter liturgy, and, though regretting their coarse superstitions, recognizes the fundamental Christianity of Roman Catholics. Blankaart is a middling character. He favours fundamentals (though not, of course, predestination) rather than the traditional doctrines in full, observing that truth is truth whether it derives from Luther, Calvin, Paul or Socrates. At the

<sup>45</sup> Cf. Blankaart in Wolff and Deken, *Sara Burgerhart*, Letter 19: 'Paul was the best, the most reasonable [*raisonnabelste*] man on earth.'

<sup>46</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Sara Burgerhart*, Letters 149, 158.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. the characteristic views in Buijnsters' edition of *Sara Burgerhart*, 60 and Van der Vliet, *Wolff en Deken's Brieven van Abraham Blankaart*, 288. Both claim that the 'Christian' or 'reformational Enlightenment' is the cause of a certain religious ambiguity in Wolff and Deken's novels; my point is that if their religious message was ambiguous, this was mainly the result of their strategy to vent religious criticism without unduly alienating the traditional Reformed reading public.

<sup>48</sup> Betje Wolff used the term herself; cf. *Briefwisseling van Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken*, 132–133. Cf. also A. Deken, *De voorrechten van het Christendom*, The Hague 1787, criticized in *NB* 1788-i, 310–313 for its anticlericalism and its Arianism.

same time, he defends the Reformed Church.<sup>49</sup> Blankaart represents an attempt to institutionalize the polite religious public. Wolff and Deken's conservative defence of institutional Protestantism appealed to the mainstream in the Reformed Church, and thus to the most important section of the reading public. In its emphasis on a limited number of fundamentals, *The letters of Abraham Blankaart* envisaged the disappearance of confessional boundaries in the future, and the genesis of a truly national Christendom.

Wolff and Deken strongly believed that ideals of future concord should not to be pursued at the cost of sincerity. This was the message conveyed in the 3,000 pages of the *History of Mr. Willem Leevend* (1784–1785), an apology for Christianity against sceptical freethinking.<sup>50</sup> It contains critical comments, not only on orthodox doctrine as such (one orthodox commentator announced that the Christianity defended in the novel was tantamount to Socinianism),<sup>51</sup> but especially on insincerity. The authors made their point by introducing an anonymous Nicodemist, a friend of the hero Willem Leevend. This friend relates that when he studied theology under Professor Maatig ('Moderate', who may have been modelled after Schultens or Hollebeek),<sup>52</sup> he soon realized that many of the doctrines to which he would once have to give formal assent were flagrant contradictions of common sense. These doctrines included the Trinity, predestination, atonement and eternal punishment. The anonymous theology student gradually became acquainted with the much more reasonable religious views of other denominations, read books on critical exegesis, and thus turned into a 'reasonable Christian' whose faith could be summarized in the rule, 'Jesus is the Messiah'. Having completed his studies after seven years, he was examined and ordained by an orthodox minister (a man who, characteristically, was both stupid and excitable, and addicted to pipe and bottle). The newly ordained minister did not reveal his heterodox predisposition out of compassion for his family. His father held strictly orthodox views, his mother was a melancholic pietist, and two very wealthy aunts claimed to have descended from a line of clerics beginning with one

<sup>49</sup> Van der Vliet, *Wolff en Deken's brieven van Abraham Blankaart*, 240–243.

<sup>50</sup> The same applies to Wolff and Deken's novel *Cornelia Wildschut* (1792).

<sup>51</sup> Buijnsters, *Wolff & Deken*, 227.

<sup>52</sup> Schultens was well acquainted with Betje Wolff, sending her his warm regards by way of Van Goens; *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 17 (letter to Van Goens, 17–3–1776).

of the 72 translators of the Septuagint. He had no objection whatsoever to signing formularies, and to stating that he believed in true doctrine; after all, he was not required to point out which doctrines, exactly, were true. So he simply preached the Heidelberg Catechism, avoiding orthodox doctrine. His congregation consisted mostly of simpletons who were unable to think for themselves. He was not even criticized by the blacksmith, 'a smoothly running Dortian Machine' able mechanically to reiterate the whole Cocceian litany. If, perchance, individuals of social standing (mostly elderly ladies) attended his sermon, the young minister simply put on his most orthodox look and made sure to lard his speech with pious interjections ('the Loved-Ones of Jehovah', 'the Reprobate', Christ's 'bloody merits', 'eternal damnation', and so on). In his everyday life, he especially avoided those who had been honest enough to leave the church because of their beliefs, greeting them as one would greet a Jew or a heathen. Given his position in life and his connections, and the fact that he had to feed his wife and children, the heterodox minister had no choice but to remain a Nicodemist.<sup>53</sup> Leevend took his friend to task for deliberately deceiving those who trusted him. 'He that walketh uprightly walketh surely' (Prov. 10:9). If the Reformed Church is to be reformed, writes Leevend, she must be reformed publicly. Had Erasmus not criticized his own church openly from within? Insincerity is always despicable.<sup>54</sup>

Wolff and Deken clearly sympathized with Leevend's argument rather than the sly Nicodemism of the anonymous pastor. The problem they addressed was complex. How to reform the church without stooping to the insincerity inherent in the enforced religious concord of the Old Regime? The solution Wolff and Deken offered was a moral stance that killed two birds with one stone. On the one hand, sincerity meant an open call for the transformation of the public church into a truly national church, in which everyone would be able to confess his or her own particular beliefs with candour. If, for the time being, certain confessions had to be subscribed to, this was, again, a stage that had to be passed through to achieve the necessary reforms; but it had to be passed through with sincerity. Orthodoxy was perfectly legitimate as long as it did not degenerate into an arrogant attempt to silence deviant voices by force.

<sup>53</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Willem Leevend*, Part VI, 28–35 (Letter VII).

<sup>54</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Willem Leevend*, Part VI, 35–42 (Letter VIII).

People like the tolerant Professor Maatig represent true orthodoxy.<sup>55</sup> On the other hand, the call for sincerity could mean a significant drain on the public church. It may not be fortuitous that *Willem Leevend* began to appear in 1784, the year in which the public church lost one of its most able intellectuals, Paulus van Hemert, because he was in conscience unable to subscribe to the formularies.<sup>56</sup> If all those who entertained doubts about Dort were sincere enough to leave the Reformed Church, and if all who remained were lenient Professor Moderates, how long would it take before the Calvinist establishment collapsed? Sincerity was a powerful key to institutional transformation, and one that apparently appealed to the buyers of moralistic novels.

## 7.2 HARMONY, MODERATION, DEMOGRAPHY, AND COMMERCE

Church historians, remarked an orthodox reviewer in the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek*, have the habit of giving a name to each century to distinguish it from the rest. The first century has been referred to as the Apostolic, the second as the Gnostic, and the third as the Arian era; likewise, the sixteenth century is known as the period of the Reformation and the seventeenth as that of enthusiasm. Were he asked to describe the eighteenth century, continued the reviewer, he would call it the century of ‘*Societies* with respect to the sciences, *profligacy* regarding the moral life, and *libertinism* concerning the manner of thinking.’ The reviewer may not have valued moral and intellectual excess, but he did value the societies, associations, clubs and institutes that did so much to foster wisdom and knowledge. Here, he said, men of exalted spirit, superior to the common crowd, gave accounts of their observations, thoughts and practices; by improving each other they ultimately contributed to the well-being of the whole world.<sup>57</sup>

This commentator’s views would have been shared by most lettered

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Van der Vliet, *Wolff en Deken’s brieven van Abraham Blankaart*, 336. This also explains the relatively sympathetic way the authors portray the reverend Heftig (‘Intemperate’), in *Willem Leevend*, Part II, 13–14 (Letter VI). The orthodox Heftig strongly emphasizes sincerity but rejects subscription as a requirement for holding public office; he does not, however, sympathize with a broad national church.

<sup>56</sup> See section 7.7 below.

<sup>57</sup> *NB* 1775-i, 318–329.

men and women of his time. The members of associations, the editors of periodicals, the spectators with their weekly observations, and the other many public promoters of communal activities and a conscientious press basically had the same purpose: to inculcate into their readers the shared values of a civilized Protestant nation. This section provides a brief, and very incomplete, outline of Dutch religious sociability and literary communication in the later eighteenth century, insofar as the topic has a bearing on the Dutch toleration debate.

As has often been pointed out, eighteenth-century 'sociability', the organization of free individuals in private associations, epitomized, and partly constituted, a new public sphere.<sup>58</sup> The Society for the Good of the Public (*Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen*) was one paragon of civilized sociability in the Netherlands. Established in 1784 by the Mennonite pastor Jan Nieuwenhuyzen (1724–1806) and his son Martinus (1759–1793), its ambitious aim was to foster the intellectual and moral development of the nation, concentrating especially on educational reform.<sup>59</sup> Dominated by dissenters, the Society hardly met with approval everywhere. Suspected of subverting the authority of the confessions through its educational programmes and undermining the civil order by its evident Patriot sympathies, the Society regularly felt called upon to assure its compatriots of its good intentions. In 1795, one supporter summed up the various misconceptions the Society had met with. Critics claimed that the Society consisted of all kinds of believers, so that little good could be expected with regard to theology, religion or Christian morality. They thought that the Society attempted to establish a 'universal religion' in the Netherlands. They pointed out that the Society did not enjoy government support and was, therefore, suspect. Finally, they regarded warily the attempt to enlighten the populace, for what is to become of a society in which even the common man is permitted to participate?<sup>60</sup> Such criticism shows the extent to which the Society was

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<sup>58</sup> The standard study on eighteenth-century Dutch sociability is Mijnhardt, *Tot Heil van 't Menschdom*; Kloek and Mijnhardt, *1800*; also Vermij, 'Nieuwe wijn in oude zakken?'

<sup>59</sup> Helsloot, *Martinus Nieuwenhuyzen*.

<sup>60</sup> *Verhandeling over de vraag, welke zijn de best geschikte middelen, om het nog heerschend vooroordeel tegen de Maatschappij Tot Nut van 't Algemeen weg te nemen* [*Treatise on the question, which are the best means to remove the still common prejudice against the Society of the Good of the Public*] (1795); VB 1795-i, 654–657. The clerical *Boekzaal* 145 (1787), 623–644, showed much sympathy for the Society.



seen, and not without reason, as a tool in the hands of dissenters to subvert the confessional public sphere. On the other hand, as a reflection of the polite religious public, it was both unambiguously Protestant and elitist. Illustrative is the way in which the Roman Catholic pastor Petrus Schouten was sidetracked between 1786 and 1790. In a proposal towards educational reform, he had suggested that the Society issue its own educational material and that schoolmasters willing to use it be granted society membership. This proposal meant, in effect, that the public church's influence on education would be all but neutralized. As a den of dissenters, the Society for the Good of the Public might have been expected to accept the proposal. However, the Society apparently believed that a mass incursion of schoolmasters would lower its social standing; it rejected the proposal.<sup>61</sup>

Then there was the Teyler Foundation, established at Haarlem by the Mennonite Pieter Teyler van der Hulst (1702–1778). It consisted of two societies, one of which was devoted solely to religious matters. Teyler's Theological Society explained its policies in the first issue of its fine but costly quarto publications. The Society's activities and publications were to be the result of a free inquiry into religion, guided only by Reason and Revelation, and taking no recourse whatsoever to human prescriptions; hence its motto 'True Religious Knowledge Thrives Through Liberty'. To ensure that we are not misled by prejudice, counselled the founders, we must entertain suspicions regarding the things we have learnt through upbringing and education, never subject ourselves to the particular views of one or the other Christian denomination, ignore catechisms, confessions and formularies, and reject subscription as a form of persecution. Undogmatic Christian concord, Teyler's Foundation insisted, was a prerequisite for a strong and healthy commonwealth. Understandably, the orthodox *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* was not happy with the first volume, if only because it contained essays treating the Gospel in relation to natural religion. Four of the five essays ignored, obscured, and even denied the differences between Bible and nature, and defended a Socinian Christology.<sup>62</sup> Heterodoxy was, indeed, the thrust

<sup>61</sup> Clemens, 'De maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen', 226–227.

<sup>62</sup> *Verhandelingen TGG* I; *NB* 1781-i, 481–487. The four essays criticized by the *NB* were by Daniel Hovens, Gerrit Hesselink, Petrus Loosjes, Cornelis de Vries (all Mennonites). The exception was Frederik Vaster (no dates), a functionary (as the *NB* noted) in the service of the States of Holland; Vaster wrote Orangist poetry.

of many contributions, in which German 'new reformers' were frequently applauded.

Whatever their leanings, all religious societies expected intellectual contributions from their members and sympathizers, and often these were elicited in the form of essay competitions. In this respect the *Legatum Stolpianum* at Leiden must be mentioned, though it was not strictly speaking an association. The *Legatum* was a substantial bequest of ten thousand guilders left to the Leiden Academy in 1753 by the aged Jan Stolp, a layman whose interest in divinity was as pronounced as his dislike for doctrinal niceties. From the interest yielded by the capital, a jury consisting of eight Leiden professors (with whom Stolp had been personally befriended) was to award a gold medal every so many years to the writer of an essay on natural theology. Foreigners often entered the competitions, such as Töllner, who contributed in 1769 with an essay in Latin on the question of whether God issued his laws arbitrarily, or whether man could rationally understand their perfection. Similarly, Walter Senserff (1685–1752), a high-ranking magistrate related by marriage to the wealthy De Geer family in Sweden, had determined by testament that the Reformed Church at Rotterdam could dispose over a fixed sum of money on condition that one of the local preachers held eight sermons, refuting atheists, deists, heathens, Jews, Muslims, and other opponents of the Christian religion.<sup>63</sup> In the 1790s, a group of Rotterdam Calvinists established a society 'in defence of the Christian evangelical religion' with similar aims.<sup>64</sup>

Societies of a specifically religious nature abounded in the latter three or four decades of the century, although it is often difficult to tell whether they were actual associations or merely temporary façades. A society using the motto *Pro Ecclesia eiusque Libertate* probably consisted of precisely one person, Paulus van Hemert, who used the society as a cover for translating the controversial *Letter to the Rt. Reverend the Lord Bishop of Litchfield and Coventry* (1777). The author, Edward Evanson (1731–1805), was a notorious Anglican clergyman with Unitarian sympathies who resigned from the ministry in 1778. The aim of Van Hemert's one-man society was to subvert the tyranny of ecclesiastical 'hierarchy'; the authorities soon forbade the sale of

<sup>63</sup> *NBW* I, cols. 1467–8.

<sup>64</sup> Barger, *Scharp*, 43.

its one translation.<sup>65</sup> Not all societies and institutions may have been unequivocally interconfessional, but practically all exhibited a measure of 'ecumenism'. The Collegiants by now had acquired serious competition. Indeed, the Collegiants took the ground from under their own feet by joining societies such as 'Love and Concord' (*Liefde en Eendragt*) at Amsterdam, a religious society based on the principle of free prophecy and the priesthood of believers. Significantly, a Reformed minister, Herman Westerhoff, seems to have been its spiritual leader.<sup>66</sup> Conservative Reformed divines, in turn, dominated the *Haagsch Genootschap*, although the Society was not necessarily opposed to contributions by non-Calvinists. A society at Leiden that used the motto *Ultra Posse Nemo Obligatur* had two fundamental rules. It admitted both Calvinists and Lutherans, but on condition of orthodoxy; and it did not publish poetry disrespectful of the Reformed Church, the clergy, or the government.<sup>67</sup> In a pamphlet published in 1799, Aagje Deken advised confessional cooperation at grassroots level; she looked upon private societies as a means to church union.<sup>68</sup> *Christo Sacrum* at Delft specifically fostered the collaboration of people from different confessions in this manner. Based on optimistic notions concerning natural theology and morality as a basis for communion, it stringently separated confessional doctrine from its multi-confessional liturgy (the private house where the members met had an altar with a crucifix as well as attributes for celebrating the Lord's Supper).<sup>69</sup>

Some private societies were engaged less in interconfessional harmony, pursuing a humanism of sorts instead. If any eighteenth-century society reflected in miniature what it aimed to procure in society at large, this society was doubtless *Libertate et Concordia*. Also known as the Friday Society, this club of intellectuals, established in 1734 at Amsterdam by a number of dissenters, had included distinguished lights in its ranks, among others Johann Jacob Wettstein.<sup>70</sup> Its membership policy was interconfessional, but orthodox Reformed and

<sup>65</sup> D.tr. E. Evanson, *Brief aan den Hoog Eerw. Lord-Bisschop van Lichtfield en Coventry* [1785]; review in *VL* 1785, 423–425; *Jongenen* no. 158.

<sup>66</sup> Buijsters, *Wolff & Deken*, 173.

<sup>67</sup> The society published a *Mengelstoffen* [*Miscellany*], Leiden 1778; see *NB* 1779-i, 569–574.

<sup>68</sup> Buijsters, *Wolff & Deken*, 309.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Dankbaar, 'Vroege Nederlandse stemmen'.

<sup>70</sup> Hanou, *Sluiers van Isis*, 484–494; Kooiman, 'Het ontstaan van de herstelde Evangelisch-lutherse gemeente te Amsterdam', 173–176. The society was disbanded in 1835.

Lutheran ministers were excluded so that members might speak candidly. It was also elitist. Around 1790, its members included Hendrik A. Schultens, the Reformed orientalist; Daniel Wyttenbach Jr. (1706–1779), the heterodox son of an orthodox Cocceian from Bern, and a classicist who taught at the Amsterdam *Athenaeum*; the Amsterdam jurist Hendrik Constantyn Cras (1739–1820);<sup>71</sup> the anticlerical, anti-Orangist lawyer Nicolaas Bondt (1732–1792), a close ally of the Amsterdam magistracy; Jeronimo de Bosch, a Mennonite man of letters; Van der Meersch; Joannes Lublink de Jonge, a Lutheran; Johan Rudolph Deiman, a Lutheran medical doctor who helped introduce Kant to the Netherlands; and Esdras Heinrich Mutzenbecher, a Lutheran divine critical of his church's orthodoxy. Carl Friedrich Bahrtdt later recounted the hospitality he had enjoyed at *Libertate et Concordia*, particularly mentioning the way the members had ridiculed 'Dogmatik und Priesterdespotismus'. Bahrtdt was happily surprised that even in a land so obviously inhabited by bigoted and rigidly confessional Dutchmen there still existed a temple 'wo die Vernunft als Gottheit verehrt wurde (. . .)'.<sup>72</sup> Other societies also claimed to put interconfessionalism into practice, but in fact reduced Christendom to a bare minimum. A 'Society for Promoting True Religion, Virtue, Arts and Science', established around 1797 in Grave in Brabant, included among its members the Arminian Pieter Weiland as well as Bernard Bosch and Gerrit Bacot. It was sympathetic to deism and theophilanthropism (a French deistic revolutionary cult).<sup>73</sup>

Freemasonry was another form of association, the rules and regulations of which were couched in the terms of Christian brotherhood.<sup>74</sup> An apologetic defence of freemasonry stressed that 'love, concord and forbearance' were the bonds by which members are mutually connected, 'in one word, the gentle name of Brother must be confirmed

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<sup>71</sup> Cras was a leading jurist at the Amsterdam *Athenaeum*. He contributed to Teyler's Theological Society with an essay on equality, based almost exclusively on natural law; *Verhandelingen TGG* XIII; see Zwolve, 'Frederik Adolf van der Marck en Marcus Tullius Cicero'.

<sup>72</sup> Bahrtdt, *Geschichte seines Lebens*, III, 282. Mutzenbecher later disputed Bahrtdt's account, but probably had his own political reasons to do so; see Hanou, *Shuiers van Isis*, 488.

<sup>73</sup> Van Gestel, 'Dutch reactions to Thomas Paine's *Age of reason*', 294–300; Teyler's Theological Society held a prize competition on the history of theophilanthropism in 1798.

<sup>74</sup> On freemasonry in the Netherlands: Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment*; Hanou, *Shuiers van Isis*.

by us in practice.<sup>75</sup> Contemporaries often ascribed anticlericalism to freemasons. Freemasonry, claimed a spectator in the 1760s, had been established to combat priestly authority and all infringements on man's liberty.<sup>76</sup> Some orthodox divines regarded freemasonry as a 'soul-destroying association, a plot against the civil power, a collection of people from all supposedly Christian sects (however godless and idolatrous their confessions) and even Jews, Turks and public apostates of any public religion'. A freemason hastened to defend his fraternity, claiming that the Brothers were forbidden to discuss religious matters, which they regarded as the main source of disagreement and discord. This in itself seemed highly dubious to an orthodox reviewer, who rejected the attempt to seek felicity outside religion, and condemned the Masonic confession as utterly deistic.<sup>77</sup> A German freemason like Knigge, whose books were extremely popular among the Dutch in the decades around 1800, believed that a deism of sorts was the true faith of initiated *Illuminaten*, whereas confessional Christendom and the church were simply temporary measures meant to keep the populace satisfied.<sup>78</sup> Inspired by orthodox anxiety concerning the phenomenon in Germany, the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* included an extensive account of the origins, history and aims of freemasonry.<sup>79</sup>

The rise of 'religious sociability' in the later eighteenth century indicates that societies and organizations no longer functioned as extensions of the confessional public sphere, but answered to the main principle underlying the new religious public: the liberty to develop, and give public expression to, sincere inward convictions in free association with others. The same applies to the media of the polite public, such as the learned periodical and its popular relative, the review periodical. It is important, however, to realize that peri-

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<sup>75</sup> *Vertoog, dienende tot aantooning van de ongegrondheid der lasteringen, de orde der vry-metselaars, ten onrechte aangewreven* [Discourse serving to demonstrate the unfoundedness of the slanders unrightfully imputed to the order of freemasons] (1764); quoted in *VL* 1765-i, 176.

<sup>76</sup> Hartog, *De spectatoriale geschriften van 1741-1800*, 233-234.

<sup>77</sup> *NB* 1776-i, 229-232, commenting on *Aanspraak van een Broeder V... M... aan zijne medebroeders* [Address of a brother F... M... (. . .)] (s.a.).

<sup>78</sup> Agethen, *Geheimbund und Utopie*, 267-271.

<sup>79</sup> *NB* 1780-ii, 217-237, 249-277, 298-328, 333-370, 381-416; the essay was translated from the German. Cf. the definition (217): 'Freemasons form a Society consisting exclusively of Male Adults from all social ranks and Denominations, who recognize each other as Brothers, frequently hold meetings to which non-members are not admitted, and have certain *Secrets* which they reveal to no other people.'

odicals obeyed somewhat different socio-economic rules than societies. Where a society needed no more than two members to be sociable, periodicals required a steady reading public. Laws of demography and commerce unequivocally governed these media. A population of some two million implied a relatively small book market, as Wolff and Deken and other Dutch novelists knew well enough. This made it difficult for specialized periodicals to survive, and those that did were able to because they had been adapted to a literary public characterized by lack of severe criticism and a conciliatory atmosphere.<sup>80</sup> In such a small country as the Netherlands, Dutch-language periodicals could not rely on a reading public with specific interests or concerns. They catered to a general public and therefore had to be non-specialized as to form and middling as to contents. For a review periodical or a spectator to risk a religious dispute meant that potential readers could be lost, and this might imply a fatal blow to its existence. Hence, editors tended to include reviews of books that were non-controversial, or at least kept to the religious middle. A periodical had to be sold in order to survive, which implied that a majority of potential readers had to be seduced to a subscription, irrespective of their literary or religious leanings. Prudence disguised as moderation was the editor's ineluctable policy and the publisher's commercial code. Journalists of the more critical foreign periodicals like the *Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* had little or no patience with Dutch intellectual diplomacy. Nevertheless, Dutch periodicals are an interesting phenomenon precisely because they tended to reflect the intellectual and moral leanings of the polite literary public as a whole. The following will provide a brief and incomplete outline of the more important periodicals of a religious nature.

Periodicals with specifically theological interests began to surface in the 1750s, usually presenting themselves as journals of a broad scholarly nature. The *Holland Magazine* (1750–1758), modelled after the *London Magazine*, appeared irregularly (which was characteristic of the tenuous position of such periodicals), and was able to fill only three volumes.<sup>81</sup> It specialized in Dutch translations of learned contributions

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<sup>80</sup> Johannes, *De barometer van de smaak*; also Van Eijnatten, 'German paratexts'. On the underdevelopment of a Dutch tradition of literary criticism, see Johannes, *De lof der aalbessen*, 47–50.

<sup>81</sup> *Hollands magazijn* (1750–1758); the first instalment was dedicated to George Clifford (1685–1760), a wealthy merchant, patrician, and Maecenas of the period-

to various fields of knowledge, including history, philosophy and theology, which the editors found in the publications of the Swedish and Russian Academies of Sciences, the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and the *Monthly Review*. The periodical evidently had Reformed leanings, with a distinct interest in intellectual novelties insofar as these were compatible with orthodoxy. For instance, it included a series on the notion of the best world, written by an author who clearly favoured Christian Wolff's philosophy.<sup>82</sup> It also unobtrusively inserted an essay on the consequences of unlimited freedom of thought and freedom of the press. Derived from the anonymous *Beyträge zur Vertheidigung der practischen Religion Jesu Christi*,<sup>83</sup> it argued that complete freedom would strongly support the Christian faith. A similar periodical appeared in the 1760s as *The Scholar's Treasury* (1762–1764), devoted to erudite men and other knowledgeable people, and specializing in philology, criticism, antiquities and apologetics.<sup>84</sup> Explicitly avoiding all associations with polemical theology, it was intended for Christians of all persuasions, but in practice showed a strong affiliation with the Calvinist-Lutheran communion. The editor, himself a Calvinist, carefully pointed out that nothing would be published that was not in conformity with the demands of the Dutch religious establishment.<sup>85</sup> The periodical specialized in anti-deist treatises, including pieces by English and especially German writers;<sup>86</sup> it also provided discussions that favoured reasonable Christendom and impartial scholarship over scholasticism, enthusiasm, and superstition. It was evidently a Dutch-language offspring of the scholarly interchange that had been established within the confessional public sphere during the first half of the eighteenth century, and which by the 1750s and 1760s was grad-

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ical; other instalments were dedicated to Carel van Dyk, a Haarlem magistrate, and Petrus Wesseling, a leading philologist at Utrecht.

<sup>82</sup> *Hollands magazijn* I (1750–1751), 285–341, 630–700 (with several references to Turretini, partly via Schagen's translations); the series provoked several replies, which were added to vol. I. Vol. II included some anti-deist essays by Kant's tutor at Königsberg, the Wolffian Martin Knutzen (1713–1751), and vol. III an essay by S.J. Baumgarten. On Wolff, see also section 7.4 below.

<sup>83</sup> *Hollands magazijn* II (1756), 641–687.

<sup>84</sup> *Schatkamer der geleerden* (1762–1764); the first instalment was dedicated to the directors of the *Legatum Stolpianum*, others to the combined professors of various Dutch academies.

<sup>85</sup> *Schatkamer der geleerden*, I (1762), v–xiv.

<sup>86</sup> Theodor C. Lilienthal was especially popular. Unfortunately, the Dutch contributors are known only by their initials.

ually being assimilated into a polite public of articulate citizens. This general characterization applies also to the *Dutch Literary Diversions*, meant to complement the *Scholar's Treasury* by keeping its readers up-to-date on learned books issued in all parts of Europe, and supplying extensive summaries of a selection of (especially) German and English books.<sup>87</sup>

It is rewarding to contrast the *Holland Magazine* with the later *General Magazine* (1785–1791). The latter periodical claimed to avoid essays on theology and the church, but nevertheless had much to say on religion, if only because it considered natural theology a philosophical discipline. It was meant to introduce readers to the 'wide kingdom of Sciences' by providing essays, many of them translated from foreign languages, especially German. The periodical clearly sympathized with both dissenters and Patriots. For example, an essay on the legitimacy of the Dutch revolt referred to the theories of rebellion in Grotius, Pufendorf, Barbeyrac and Vattel, defined religious liberty as an indefeasible human right, and argued that the government was obliged to protect it. An ostensibly innocuous essay on Julius Caesar immediately followed it, portraying this traitor of the republic as a bloodthirsty murderer—a message easily understood by the reading public of the 1780s. Conversely, the Roman Empire under the Antonines was praised for its state religion, which had been warmly supported by the whole population (the enlightened philosophers as well as the superstitious populace), and provided for a variety of cults that mutually tolerated each other.<sup>88</sup> Another essay commended Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft's aversion to theological squabbles, while Gerard Vossius was honoured as the writer of the *Historia Pelagiana*.<sup>89</sup> The periodical further included many pieces by the German *Popularphilosophen*: Eberhard, Nicolai, Wieland, Villaume, Engel and no less than twelve essays by Christian Garve (1742–1798). It was probably used as a medium by critical thinkers in the Reformed Church, such as the jurist Hendrik Cras, who contributed a number of essays. The *General Magazine*, then, was progressive in tenor, but not excessively so. Its position in the Dutch toleration debate is illustrated by an extensive essay on 'Unbelief and

<sup>87</sup> *Nederlandsche letter-verlustiging* (1762–1764). This periodical was in turn continued as *De akademie der geleerden* [*The academy of scholars*] (1764–1770).

<sup>88</sup> *Algemeen Magazyn*, 1785-i, 105–131, 132–143; 1787-i, 285–317.

<sup>89</sup> *Algemeen Magazyn*, 1785-i, 305–333 and 1787-i, 91–124.



morals', which disputed the claim of contemporary 'unbelievers' that they were as capable as anyone of living a virtuous social life. Contending that the writings of Kant and the Kantians were too abstruse, the author recommended instead Jacques Necker's popular *De l'importance des opinions religieuses* (1788).<sup>90</sup> According to the author, it was imperative to society that religiosity increased at the same pace as did civilization.<sup>91</sup>

The *General Magazine* is illustrative in another respect. As the century progressed, periodicals became less erudite in prolixity of footnotes or complexity of subject material, and began to publish articles for a broader public. A typical example of an erudite divine who successfully combined broad traditional orthodoxy with modern authorial techniques was Nuys van Klinkenberg. Taking his cue from the spectators (a genre in decline, as he noted), this Reformed divine filled *The Christian* (1772–1778) with weekly instalments in which he demonstrated the divine origins of the Bible, beginning with Moses and ending, seven years later, with John.<sup>92</sup> He also added essays on other religious topics, including an account of Christian discord. The question he posed was one asked by many in his day. If the clarity of the Christian religion is as great as it must be, why is there so much dissension over doctrine? The *Christian* replied that the fundamental issues were indeed perfectly clear, and that the Gospel certainly enjoins us to 'be of one accord' (Phil. 2:2). The causes of discord are human corruption and the influence of pagan philosophy, as Mosheim had shown. Discord, moreover, fulfils a specific purpose. God has admitted disagreement so that sincere believers may examine his Word and arm themselves against temptation.<sup>93</sup>

Another periodical catering to a broader public, albeit a less orthodox one, was *The Friend of Religion* (1789–1793), to which Bernard Bosch and Van Hamelsveld contributed.<sup>94</sup> The writers portrayed themselves as 'members of the universal Christian church', and thus in the fullest sense 'public preachers of the simple Gospel'. The essays

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<sup>90</sup> Translated as *Het wigtige der godsdienstige begrippen* (1788); the book included a chapter on intolerance. An extract from the book on the consoling influence of religious notions was included in *VL* 1788-ii, 250–256.

<sup>91</sup> *Algemeen Magazyn*, 1791-i, 3–74.

<sup>92</sup> *De Christen* (1772–1778); the periodical was emphatically intended for orthodox Christians belonging to *all* denominations.

<sup>93</sup> *De Christen*, V (1776), 361–376.

<sup>94</sup> *De Godsdienstvriend* (1789–1793).

focused on exegesis, practical theology, and doctrine; German developments were valued although their excesses were condemned. The periodical was, in short, another mouthpiece of the reformist group within the Reformed Church. It criticized the obeisance of Calvinist ministers to fabricated systems—those of Cocceius, Voet, and Lampe—and the way their orthodoxy was defended in inordinately lengthy and repetitive books by the arrogant leaders of various factions. By persecuting ‘generous self-thinkers’, these ‘so-called *Orthodox* system-fabricators’ obstructed the advancement and dissemination of the ‘noblest truths’.<sup>95</sup> The editors were soon regarded as an Arminian clique, and felt called upon to assure Calvinist readers that they agreed ‘in essence’ with the most orthodox members of the Synod of Dort, but opposed an excessively abstract approach to predestination.<sup>96</sup> The periodical included articles in which Reformed pietism was reprimanded for its unhealthy ‘mystical’ predilections. The reformist Calvinism of *The Friend of Religion* was exemplified in an essay on Christian brotherhood, in which charity was extended to all men, the unity of the primitive church praised, and Christian discord lamented—without, however, suggesting that unity was possible in the short run.<sup>97</sup>

Even under the diplomatic conventions of the Dutch literary public, it is difficult to underestimate the significance of review periodicals as media of criticism. The most important of them all, in terms of longevity, sales, and success, was doubtless the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen* (*Patriotic or National Literary Exercises*, 1761–1876). Two Mennonites, both ministers at Haarlem, ran the periodical in this period: Cornelis Loosjes, who founded it and remained its editor until he died, and his brother Petrus Loosjes (1735–1813).<sup>98</sup> The periodical showed a strong interest in its English counterparts.<sup>99</sup> The intention

<sup>95</sup> *De Godsdienstvriend*, I (1789), 1–8.

<sup>96</sup> *De Godsdienstvriend*, I (1789), 89–96; the article was written by IJ. van Hamelsveld.

<sup>97</sup> *De Godsdienstvriend*, IV (1792), 49–56.

<sup>98</sup> Johannes Grashuis (1699–1772), a Rijnsburger Collegiant and acquaintance of Betje, also contributed to *VL*; *Briefwisseling van Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken*, 124.

<sup>99</sup> One of these was *The Library, or, moral and critical magazine*, which appeared in London 1761–1762; the contributors included Andrew Kippis (1725–1795), a non-conformist divine who also contributed to two better known periodicals from which the *VL* often drew articles: *The Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Monthly Review*. Kippis had renounced the Calvinism of his youth, embraced Unitarianism, and strongly opposed subscription. There were also contacts between Dutch dissenters and the editors of the *Monthly Review*, probably via English correspondents in Amsterdam.

from the outset was to cater to the reading public as a whole, irrespective of religious and political leanings. Although the editors tried to remain as noncommittal as possible (many reviews are indeed no more than concise summaries), to careful observers they all too clearly sympathized with religious dissent and Patriotism. Not surprisingly, the periodical's editors were suspected of complicity in publishing critical spectators (which was perfectly true), and regularly accused of insufferable heterodoxy.<sup>100</sup> As a German observer put it, the periodical was 'im geruch der Kezerey und Toleranz'.<sup>101</sup> Despite the criticism it received, the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen* strove to keep the peace. The knowledgeable Mennonite Allard Hulshoff observed that the editors were very precise about phrasing the controversial issues discussed in their periodical. 'They never take the bull by the horns; but, in unison with the publishers, they deem it best always to operate prudently and with reticence; in the hope of thus sustaining a large number of subscribers in the long term.'<sup>102</sup> This was as clear a statement as any of the effects of demography and commerce on literary criticism.

The *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen* did much to mould a middling religious public. It also contributed directly to the toleration debate. One of the first essays it published concerned 'The need for love of truth in religion'. The anonymous author observed that whereas many people departed from the ways of their forefathers in civil matters, they still clung to ancestral views in respect of religion; and he continued with an harangue against subscription and intolerance.<sup>103</sup> Another essay included in the 'Miscellany' was concerned with 'Pedantry in religious matters'. Pedantry, said the author, is a form of arrogance consisting of a person's idle conviction that he possesses greater abilities and wisdom than others, and is usually attended by the inclination to quarrel about every minor detail. Such self-conceit

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For example, after the dismissal of Van der Marck, Allard Hulshoff suggested to Goodricke that it might be worthwhile to have the law professor's own account of the affair translated into English, or otherwise to get the *Monthly Review* to publish it; ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by Allard Hulshoff, dd. 1-7-1774.

<sup>100</sup> Cf. the attack on *De Denker* and *VL: Letterkundige brieven ter verdediging van de leer en leeraars der gereformeerde kerk* [*Literary letters in defence of the doctrine and pastors of the Reformed Church*] (1768); *VL* 1768-i, 503-509; Petrus Loosjes, for example, was associated with both *De Denker* and *VL*.

<sup>101</sup> *Deutsches Museum*, II, 1776, 709.

<sup>102</sup> ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by Allard Hulshoff, dd. 31-12-1775.

<sup>103</sup> *VL* 1761-i, 45-56.

manifests itself specifically in religious matters among those who do not take the trouble to think for themselves. Characteristically, the author compared freethinkers who gave credence to everything their philosophical masters said to traditional believers who gave credence to everything the clergy said.<sup>104</sup> Many such essays were probably based on entries in English periodicals.<sup>105</sup> Sometimes direct translations were published, such as the 'Essay on toleration' included in 1769 (during the controversy begun by Goodricke). The general message of this essay was that an established religion was indispensable to the well-being of the civil state, that plans for reform had to be adduced with the utmost discretion, and that universal toleration ought to be realized among sincere and peaceful Christians. Independence of thought and religious liberty had to be maintained at all costs. How unfortunate that early Christianity has been corrupted, and that obscure canons of orthodoxy have been substituted for simple truths! Religious discord is maintained, and Christian concord prevented, by the pride and ambition of the various clergies, who are all afraid of losing their authority once unity has been achieved.<sup>106</sup>

In the face of this tolerant offensive, the Calvinist clergy founded the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* (*Dutch Library*, 1774–1788). It can perhaps best be regarded as the Dutch equivalent of the orthodox *Hamburgische Nachrichten aus dem Reiche der Gelehrsamkeit* (1758–1771), after which it was probably modelled.<sup>107</sup> The principal editor was Johannes Habbema, but the masterminds were Petrus Hofstede and probably Petrus Nieuwland.<sup>108</sup> When they started out, the editors of the *Nederlandsche*

<sup>104</sup> *VL* 1765-ii, 133–145. Cf. also *VL* 1780-ii, 359–365 (a parable called 'The Hairsplitters'); *VL* 1772-ii, 317–321, an explanation of 2 Pet. 1:5–7 (on mutual charity); *VL* 1781-i, 373–377, with a 'Candid inquiry into religion' by 'C.B.Z.'

<sup>105</sup> Cf. *VL* 1763-ii, 1–8, with an essay on natural religion excerpted from *The Library*, with much praise for Foster, Tillotson and Sharp.

<sup>106</sup> *VL* 1769-ii, 53–58; the translator was a certain 'E.J.' Another essay, by the dissenting divine William Enfield (1741–1797), who wrote extensively in English periodicals, contested the sectarianism evinced by orthodox divines and which led to persecution and superstition; *VL* 1775-ii, 3–7. An essay by the 'evangelical' bishop Beilby Porteus (1731–1808), demonstrated the peaceful nature of Christianity; *VL* 1796-ii, 1–9, 49–57.

<sup>107</sup> The *Hamburgische Nachrichten* were supported by Goeze, whose activities and writings were warmly supported by *NB*; cf. an essay by Goeze on Calvin's *Institutio*, from the *Hamburgische Nachrichten* of 1772, in *NB* 1774/II-i, 36–41.

<sup>108</sup> It is still not known who the various sympathizers and contributors to the *NB* were; from the various instalments it can be gathered that they included J.D. van Hoven, Heman, C.F. Kuypers Gz [† 1798, minister, son of Gerard], C. van den Broek.

*Bibliothek* stated explicitly that the periodical was intended as an orthodox Reformed alternative to the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen*, and it was said that the latter periodical was more on its guard than ever before.<sup>109</sup> The editors of the *Nederlandsche Bibliothek* claimed to respect the religious views of others, but also opposed ‘erroneous tolerance.’ Their definition of ‘correct’ tolerance was wholly in conformity with Van den Honert’s notion of *tolérance civile*. They did not begrudge others religious freedom, as long as it was exercised under the indirect supervision of a dominant church.<sup>110</sup> The periodical’s policy was slightly modified after a year. The editors now sought to oppose explicitly all writings that either supported or subverted the Christian religion in general or the Reformed faith and its various formularies in particular.<sup>111</sup> The following year the editor expressly noted that the periodical wished to defend ‘the honour of our Civil and Ecclesiastical Constitution, to wit, a free States government presided over by a Stadtholder’, and the established doctrines of the Reformed Church.<sup>112</sup> In the later 1770s, reviews became less harsh. The journal was all the worse for lack of the ‘salt of spite’, wrote Van Goens in 1777, and had become perfectly insipid and unreadable.<sup>113</sup> Towards 1788, the periodical even lost its specifically confessional character. Demography and commerce had once again triumphed over principle. The *Nederlandsche Bibliothek* was continued as the *Vaderlandsche Bibliothek* (1789–1796), a periodical that, as we have observed more than once, remained rooted in the Reformed Church but put far less emphasis on confessional orthodoxy. The periodical also evinced marked Patriotic sympathies, as Hofstede noticed soon enough, referring to the new editors as a bunch of ‘Tolerants, Patriots, and modern Church reformers.’<sup>114</sup>

<sup>109</sup> MS Leiden BPL 1160, letter by Allard Hulshoff, dd. 1–7–1774.

<sup>110</sup> *NB* 1774/I-i, preface.

<sup>111</sup> *NB* 1774/II-i, preface.

<sup>112</sup> *NB* 1775-i, preface by Johannes Habbema. Cf. e.g. *NB* 1776-ii, 108, with a poem by ‘M.V.K.’ on the 37 articles of the Belgic Confession; *NB* 1785-ii, 175–184, on three fundamentals of Christianity (the immaculate conception, the union of divine and human nature in Christ, and the satisfaction).

<sup>113</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 32–33 (letter to Schultens, 20–8–1777). Van Goens had been embroiled in a conflict with the editors of *NB*, who had accused him of disrespect towards the sacred texts.

<sup>114</sup> Quoted in *VB* 1790-i, 156. The motto on the title page of *VB* is Christ’s rule of charity in Matth. 7:12; J.J. van Hamelsveld was a reviewer of both the later *NB* and the *VB*.

Another major review periodical was the *Library of the Learned World* (*Boekzaal der geleerde waereld*, 1715–1811), which during most of its long and rather tedious existence functioned as a source of ecclesiastical information for the Reformed clergy.<sup>115</sup> It catered to the reverends of the Reformed Church, bringing them up to date on the latest synods, callings, deaths, and other major events in Dutch church life. The *Boekzaal* occupied an unassailable niche in the book market. On the other hand, it hardly excelled at ripping articles or catching reviews. As a semi-official organ of the church, it had very little leeway in its selection and commentaries, and more often than not its reviews were so middling as to be mediocre. Yet, even the *Boekzaal* moved with the times and each month informed its readers on a relatively wide range of books. It was said that Martinet was a major contributor during the 1770s and 1780s;<sup>116</sup> a watchful observer during these years would have recognized attempts to introduce less traditional notions from time to time, references to poems by Bernard Bosch, for example, or a review of a later work by Van der Marck, or praise for a Patriot treatise on liberty.<sup>117</sup> The *Boekzaal* was on the whole a benevolent periodical that criticized pietist excesses and avoided the worst controversies, and preferred to highlight constructive contributions to spiritual harmony, such as the simple poem ‘On Concord’ which a reviewer found in one of the many poetry collections of his day.<sup>118</sup>

The Amsterdam publisher Jan Döll, who was usually good for critical books, issued the *General Library* (1777–1786). The periodical contained ‘impartial’ reviews of Italian, Swiss, German, French, English and the ‘best’ Dutch publications, with all due respect for ‘Freedom of speech, writing, and the Press’, which, as the preface to the first volume had it, is a natural human right.<sup>119</sup> One of the first reviews concerned a sermon by the controversial dissenter David Williams (1738–1816), held at the founding of a ‘Church of Unbelievers’ who

<sup>115</sup> *Boekzaal*; cf. *De Nederlandsche criticus* (1750), on the periodical: ‘serving mostly to highlight *Theologians*, in result of which it will in due course provide a Legend of Protestant Saints, rather than products of excellent minds.’

<sup>116</sup> ms Leiden BPL 1160, letter by Allard Hulshoff, dd. 31–12–1775; Hulshoff expected Martinet to support Van der Marck’s cause, which he did: Martinet, *Historie der waereld*, V, 151.

<sup>117</sup> E.g. *Boekzaal* 142 (1786), 46 (reference to Bosch); 143 (1786), 11–20 (review of Van der Marck); 144 (1787), 512–513 (praise for J. Allart’s tract *De Vrijheid*).

<sup>118</sup> *Boekzaal* 147 (1788), 39–43.

<sup>119</sup> *Algemeene bibliotheek*, I (1777), III–IV.

believed in the principles of natural religion.<sup>120</sup> The periodical reviewed books by Adam Smith, Joseph Priestley, Hugh Farmer, William Robertson, Johann Semler, and Gottlieb Steinbart. This selection of authors, apart from the periodical's often anticlerical tone and obviously Patriotic leanings, did not conduce to continuity. After two volumes, the periodical began to appear irregularly and it disappeared with the suppression of the Patriot revolution. The only critical review of an outright controversial work concerned David Hume's *Dialogues concerning natural religion* (1779). According to the reviewer, Hume undermined the grounds of virtue by portraying man as a despicable monstrosity brought forth by arbitrary nature.<sup>121</sup>

The most critical Dutch-language review periodical of the period was simply called *The Reviewer* (1787–1793). Modelled after the major German review periodicals,<sup>122</sup> it was established out of profound dissatisfaction with the state of Dutch scholarship, including theology. It could not be denied, observed the editors, that a purer and more *aufgeklärte* (*opgeklaarde*) philosophy was doing away with ingrained religious prejudice—a certain sign was the ready translation of foreign theological books. However, the Dutch were hardly able to dispel obsolete beliefs by themselves, or get rid of the inquisitory habits that had flourished for so long in these lands. The lack of patronage, the widespread emphasis on wealth rather than talent as a means to make a public career, and the superstitious dependence on formularies had made the Republic unduly backward. This sorry state of affairs the periodical sought to amend by publishing 'impartial' reviews.<sup>123</sup> If the aim was noble, the result was not unbiased. In fourteen instalments, appearing irregularly, the reviewers of *The Reviewer* wrote exceedingly pithy essays, criticizing, in particular, the public church and its clergy. Outspokenness was not a commercial virtue, however, especially not when combined with a high sales price. The periodical soon floundered and went defunct after three and a half volumes. The periodical's sympathies had, moreover, been all too obviously Patriotic. Its driving spirit was Wilhelmus Irhoven van Dam

<sup>120</sup> Together with Benjamin Franklin, Williams had written 'A liturgy on the universal principles of religion and morality' in 1776, containing the views of a group of like-minded thinkers who gathered at his house in Chelsea. Williams own creed ran, 'I believe in God. Amen'.

<sup>121</sup> *Algemeene bibliotheek*, III (1782), 503–520.

<sup>122</sup> The editors were especially familiar with the *Berlinische Monatschrift*.

<sup>123</sup> *De recensent*, I, 1787, introduction.

(1760–1802), a Patriot publicist who had left Holland in 1787 but was soon granted amnesty.<sup>124</sup> Paulus van Hemert married his sister, which resulted in favourable reviews of his own often controversial books. Even the *Allgemeine Literatur-Zeitung* stated that the periodical ‘sich durch seinen freymüthigen Ton (. . .) rühmlich auszeichnet.’<sup>125</sup>

There were some attempts to counter critical review periodicals like the *General Library* and *The Reviewer* by issuing journals formally examined and approved by the Reformed Church. The *Book Observer* (1793) was one such short-lived affair, explicitly meant to defend orthodox theologians against critical books and critical reviewers.<sup>126</sup> The fact that neither radical nor orthodox review periodicals were blessed with longevity and stability testifies to the success of the polite public as well as to the limited possibilities for intellectual extremes in the Dutch Republic. The majority of spokesmen for the polite public would probably not have been unduly worried by such shortcomings. If demography and commerce ordained that Dutchmen should live their lives in harmony and moderation, opinion makers were perfectly content that the invisible hand of economics thus directly supported public morality.

### 7.3 SWAYING THE PUBLIC IN WEEKLY ANALYSES

Moral weeklies, too, had to cater to a public that was interested in criticism as long as it was constructive and kept to the middle way. However, their informal style, broad range, emphasis on morality and lower prices allowed them to take greater liberties in criticizing church and clergy than the more ‘serious’ review and scholarly periodicals.<sup>127</sup> Hofstede even observed, in 1775, that English spectators were better than the Dutch because they contained nothing offensive to the dominant religion or the public clergy.<sup>128</sup> In this respect, at

<sup>124</sup> Another contributor was Willem Holtrop (1751–1835), publisher and outspoken Patriot.

<sup>125</sup> Quoted in Van Galen, ‘De Recensent 1787–1793’, 63

<sup>126</sup> *Boekbeschouwer*, the periodical was meant as an alternative to the *VL* and the *VB*. Another short-lived orthodox periodical was *De gereformeerde godsdienst ongedwongen gehandhaafd* [*The Reformed religion maintained without constraint*] (1794).

<sup>127</sup> For the German context, see Stephan-Kopitzsch, *Die Toleranzdiskussion*.

<sup>128</sup> P. Hofstede, *Byzonderheden over de Heilige Schrift* [*Particulars concerning Holy Scripture*] (1766–1775), III, 467.



least, Dutch spectators took the libertarian principle of the polite public seriously, seeking a free and public exchange of ideas to contribute to a reform of the moral order. The way in which moral weeklies sustained the polite public is the topic of this section; we shall discuss some major spectators of the 1750s, 1760s, and 1770s.

The most extensive criticism of the clergy appeared in *The Clergy's Moralists* (1750–1752). Wholly devoted to criticizing the orthodox establishment and what it regarded as pietist excess, this 'spectator' was enormously popular and had the rare honour of being reprinted.<sup>129</sup> Its editor and chief (if not exclusive) author was Philip Ludwig Stadius Muller (1725–1776), a divine appointed to shepherd the Lutheran congregation at Leeuwarden in Friesland.<sup>130</sup> Educated as a theologian in Jena, Stadius Muller was deeply influenced by the theological renewal in Germany, especially by Mosheim and the Wolffian Siegmund J. Baumgarten. He had barely tended to his flock for a year when this fervent defender of ecclesiastical and academic reform was accused of 'Bekkerism', since he had not interpreted the temptation of Christ literally. Other charges included syncretism and disregard for formularies. Characteristically, the complainant belonged to the artisan class, while Stadius Muller himself had a following among the well-to-do. After protracted and highly intricate ecclesiastical and political intrigues and many self-assured appeals to both local and provincial magistrates and the stadtholderate, Stadius Muller decided to exchange his troublesome congregation for the university at Erlangen, in Germany. Here the talented critic and bestselling essayist embarked on a rather obscure career as a professor of natural philosophy.

The *Clergy's Moralists* appeared in the midst of Stadius Muller's conflict with his congregation. The periodical was devoted to examining why there was so little 'true religiosity' among the Dutch clergy, and so little interest in the cause of 'universal ecclesiastical peace.'<sup>131</sup> Stadius Muller dedicated it to an imaginary 'Society of Reasonable Biblians,' consisting of divines from all Protestant denominations who fostered charity, concord and religious reform. Whereas most moral

<sup>129</sup> *Zeedemeester der kerkelyken* (1750–1752, 1766).

<sup>130</sup> Kooiman, 'Philippus Ludovicus Stadius Muller'; Stadius Muller was reputed to be a freemason.

<sup>131</sup> The irenic aspirations of *The Clergy's Moralists* were criticized (possibly by Stadius Muller himself) in the *Hollands Magazijn* I (1750–1751), 1–86 (separate pagination).

weeklies—the multitude of ‘Spectators, Moralists, Babblers, Guardians, Patriots, Misanthropes, Examiners, Censors’—had sought to reform society, the *Clergy’s Moralist* wished to ameliorate the church and the clergy with the explicit purpose of uniting Christianity.<sup>132</sup> Almost immediately, the spectator applied itself to discussing the discord among Protestants, defending the freedoms of inquiry and speech and condemning ecclesiastical and academic censorship. An allegory depicting ‘Father Forbearance’ lamented the lack of religious peace and toleration in the Republic.<sup>133</sup> Other essays ridiculed the prejudice among professors and clergymen, discussed the temperamental causes of religious zeal and the pietist conception of piety, and denounced, among many other things, enthusiasm, pastoral pedantry, persecution, ignorance, subscription, polemical theology, and clerical authority. Revealing his German education, Staius Muller included a consideration of the idea of ‘syncretism’, a reference to the *Synkretismusstreit* following Calixt’s proposals for church unity. He observed that attempts to unify the churches had not and would not achieve results because of the opposition of professors and pastors. Anxious to sell the handbooks and catechisms on which they had laboured so hard, the organized clergy believed that abolishing institutions, synods and confessions would open the door to heresy. Consequently, they criticized the integration of denominations in one public church as a sign of indifferentism and the cause of spiritual anarchy. The *Clergy’s Moralist* itself advocated far-reaching reforms. By ignoring received opinions, theological systems, patristic sources and particular theologians, and by simulating the early Christians who took recourse only to Reason and Scripture, Christians would discover that what they believed was fundamentally the same.<sup>134</sup> In a subsequent essay Staius Muller defended, in tune with radical dissenters in England and the Republic, the Lockean thesis that there is only one fundamental article, namely, that ‘Jesus is the Messiah.’<sup>135</sup> Pointing to contemporary Prussia, he suggested in his final contribution that

<sup>132</sup> *Zeedemeester der kerkelyken*, 1–v, b–g. Note that Venema also used the term as a pseudonym in the 1750s; De Bruïne, *Herman Venema*, 65–66.

<sup>133</sup> *Zeedemeester der kerkelyken*, 9–16 (discord); 41–48 (allegory); cf also 585–592 (on toleration in England and the Republic).

<sup>134</sup> *Zeedemeester der kerkelyken*, 169–176; cf. also 641–648, 657–664.

<sup>135</sup> *Zeedemeester der kerkelyken*, 321–328; translated from an essay by an English dissenter who is referred to in the periodical in various places as ‘my Englishman’ or ‘Liberius Anglicanus’.

the Dutch authorities establish a unified church and appoint a clergy on the basis of their experience, talents and attachment to the Bible.<sup>136</sup> After 120 essays and almost 1,000 pages, the remarkable Status Muller took leave of his public.

*The Clergy's Moralists* was not the only moral weekly to admonish the clergy. The *Dutch Spectator* (1749–1760),<sup>137</sup> for instance, could also be quite outspoken in its religious criticism. It first made itself heard by publishing an essay in which Dutch readers were called upon to show greater respect for Jews. In the Dutch Republic, Christians did not refrain from insulting Jews out of conviction, but out of fear for the law, as was shown by the way Jews were generally treated with contempt.<sup>138</sup> Interspersing their commentaries with philo-Catholic remarks, the editors subsequently produced disapproving articles on catechizers and pietists, and equitable discussions of religious indulgence (even advocates of toleration were sometimes reprimanded for their intolerance), the pursuit of clerical hegemony, and civil concord.<sup>139</sup> The *Dutch Spectator's* emphasis on *civil* concord eventually caused one reader to complain that *religious* concord should also be discussed. The editors responded with the ironical observation that since the Calvinist clergy regarded themselves as the exclusive gatekeepers of heaven, they did not differ from Peter's supposed successor at Rome. A reunion between the Catholic and Calvinist churches was, therefore, more likely than ever.<sup>140</sup>

Dutch spectators were generally modelled after their English and German counterparts. Dutch praise for Addison and Steele was as widespread as it was for the man who had introduced them into the Republic, Justus van Effen (1684–1735). Van Effen could easily have qualified as a Huguenot if he had not been a Hollander who had

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<sup>136</sup> *Zeedemeester der kerkelyken*, 937–944. Status Muller criticized his own proposals in another spectator which appeared in the same period, *De Nederlandsche criticus* [*The Dutch Critic*], 33–40; also 337–344, in praise of Jablonski's unionism. In this periodical the 'Reasonable Biblians' are also called the Bereans, after Acts 17:10–11 (who 'searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so').

<sup>137</sup> *Nederlandsche spectator* (1749–1760).

<sup>138</sup> *Nederlandsche spectator*, I (1749), 129–136. For texts regarding the mutual toleration of Christians, the author referred his readers to Locke, Noodt, Barbeyrac, and the provocative *L'Asiatique tolérant*, Paris, [1748], by the French Protestant Laurent-Angliviel de La Beaumelle; on the latter, see Adams, *Huguenots*, 123–125.

<sup>139</sup> *Nederlandsche spectator*, IV (1752), 73–80 (catechizers), 97–104 (pietists); VI (1754), 153–168 (indulgence, with an epigraph taken from Werenfels), IX (1757), 89–96 (clerical hegemony); X (1758), 105–144 and XI (1759), 9–16, 25–40 (civil concord).

<sup>140</sup> *Nederlandsche spectator*, XII (1760), 161–168.

never been to France.<sup>141</sup> He befriended many Huguenot exiles, was a member of the Walloon church, and wrote French-language spectators. The son of an officer in the Dutch cavalry, Van Effen studied at Utrecht and in 1708 began his career as a tutor in the service of a wealthy widow. His first feat as a man of letters was the spectator *Le Misanthrope* (1711–1712), which started to appear only two months after the first instalment of Addison and Steele's *Spectator*, and was well-read and much-acclaimed among francophone Europeans during the first half of the century.<sup>142</sup> Apart from translating Addison and Steele's *The Guardian* into French, Van Effen wrote the most famous Dutch spectator, appropriately called the *Holland Spectator* (1731–1735). A highly talented mediator between French, English and Dutch culture, he became the most influential literary figure of the first half of the eighteenth century, so much so that the *Holland Spectator* is still quoted in popular anthologies of Dutch literature. Van Effen was also a critical religious writer, whose work typifies the ambivalence of apologetic discourse. In a long harangue against libertinism in the *Misanthrope*, he reproached the obnoxious dandies and *esprits forts* who parroted Collins' *Discourse on free thinking* in Dutch salons. The ambiguity in such diatribes may be illustrated by the following passage:

Des grammairiens se persécuteraient pour l'amour d'une virgule ou d'une lettre s'ils pouvaient disposer de l'épée du magistrat et s'ils ne craignaient pas d'exposer leur fureur à la risée publique. La véritable source de la persécution, c'est l'orgueil qui est presque toujours accompagné de cruauté. C'est une haute opinion qu'on a de la raison des autres hommes, de la faire ramper sous leur prétendue supériorité d'esprit et de lui imposer le joug de leurs décisions.<sup>143</sup>

Such passages indicted freethinkers as much as they did the clergy. Later, in the highly successful *Holland Spectator*, Van Effen provided unsurpassed moral lessons, instilling his public with the values of reasonableness and sociability.<sup>144</sup> Setting the tone for many future Dutch

<sup>141</sup> On Van Effen, see Buijnsters, *Justus van Effen*, the most up-to-date biography.

<sup>142</sup> There were reissues in 1726 and 1742. According to Buijnsters, *Justus van Effen*, 66, the *Misanthrope* was modelled after the French moralist writings of La Bruyère, La Rochefoucauld and Boileau.

<sup>143</sup> Buijnsters, *Justus van Effen*, 67–68, 213–218. Van Effen, *Le Misanthrope*, 134–192 (essays XXXIII–XXXVIII; quotation at 187); published as 'Réflexions sur le caractère des esprits-forts & des incrédules' (1712; extended version in a reissue of the *Misanthrope* in 1726).

<sup>144</sup> Buijnsters, *Justus van Effen*, 251–271.

spectators, he raged against atheism while branding sectarian pietism, criticized the profligate behaviour of the clergy as a cause of unbelief, and praised the way in which the Dutch clergy were firmly kept out of politics. He avoided doctrinal issues, advocating the political toleration that fostered the peace and well-being of the United Provinces.<sup>145</sup> His collaborators included a number of dissenters as well as several Calvinists (whose orthodoxy was not conspicuous). Not surprisingly, the periodical was sharply reprimanded in the 1730s by the austere South Holland Synod.<sup>146</sup> By the time the Synod had collected sufficient proof to attempt to convince the authorities (who, as usual, were most adept at procrastinating), Van Effen had terminated his periodical.

The religious gospel conveyed by Dutch spectators often contained more radicalism than has been supposed. Obviously, Ludvig Holberg's *Moralske Tanker* (1744), which appeared twice in Dutch, was partly translated because of its pronounced anti-Calvinistic message.<sup>147</sup> One of the essays contained 'the author's opinion concerning various important articles of faith.' It began by arraigning the Reformers for having covertly restricted the *sola scriptura* principle by requiring subscription to confessions of faith. The essay is, in effect, a warm plea for freedom of inquiry, based on the perennial argument that faith is not a question of inheritance or the obsequious affirmation of everything a clergyman says. Holberg's own principles were threefold: not to believe anything contradicting empirical observation (which ruled out transubstantiation); not to accept anything that weakens the *sola scriptura* principle (which effectively legitimated most heresies); and to reject everything contradicting the divine attributes (which disqualified the Calvinist notion of election). The latter topic was argued upon at greater length in an essay on 'absolute predestination'.<sup>148</sup> One of

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<sup>145</sup> Van Effen defended his friend Paul Maty, a teacher of religion at the Ecole de Charité at The Hague, who was attacked for writing a *Lettre d'un théologien à un autre théologien, sur le mystère de la Trinité* (1729). Van Effen condemned orthodox intolerance, laughed off synodal authority, and broke a lance for freedom of inquiry. Excerpts from Van Effen's *Essay sur la manière de traiter la controverse* (1730) were later published in *VL* 1764-ii, 367-383, 415-427, 464-472.

<sup>146</sup> Buijnsters, *Justus van Effen*, 274-277.

<sup>147</sup> Translated as *De Deensche Spectator* (1747-1748), following a German translation; and as *De Deensche Wysgeer* (1754, reprint 1765), an abridged version based on the Danish original.

<sup>148</sup> Ludvig Holberg, *De Deensche spectator, of zedekundige vertogen* (1747), I, \*2v; II, 12-29, 38-46. On the Dutch translations of Holberg: Ferwerda, *Holberg en Holland*. Even more outspoken were Holberg's *Epistler* (1748-1754), translated into Dutch

the most notorious spectators to appear in the eighteenth century was Van Woensel's *The Lantern* (1792–1800), although it was perhaps more an almanac than a spectator. Even the *Letter-Oefeningen* qualified it as arrogant. In a humorous anticlerical essay called the 'History of spiritual persecution', Van Woensel regretted the bitter warfare waged by the Dutch clergy. Had they simply accepted the Catholics in the decades before Dort, the Austrian Netherlands and the Dutch Republic would still be one state, and the northern universities would not have been deprived of income because future priests went to Louvain for their education.<sup>149</sup>

The better-known critical spectators of the 1760s and 1770s included *The Philanthropist* (1757–1762), *The Thinker* (1764–1775), *The Philosopher* (1766–1769), and *The Rhapsodist* (1771–1783).<sup>150</sup> They contributed substantially to the formation of a polite public free from confessional strictures. The editors of *The Rhapsodist* established a number of 'laws' delineating the periodical's policy; Law 4 stated that *any* subject could be broached.<sup>151</sup> Many editors and writers of spectators were highly articulate dissenters who knew each other well and shared a common cause. For example, the contributors to *The Thinker* are known to have included the Mennonites Cornelis van Engelen, Petrus Loosjes and Simon de Vries, the Remonstrant Abraham A. van der Meersch, and the (nominal) Calvinist Nicolaas Bondt. This group of thinkers was certain to write critical essays. Indeed, *The Thinker* did much to disseminate ideas on toleration. Like the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen*, it was particularly oriented towards English periodicals, from which the editors occasionally drew material. The first volume included an essay on liberty of expression by an anonymous English writer.<sup>152</sup> Other essays condemned the clerical lust for power and

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(via German) as L. Holberg, *Verzameling van brieven* (1768–1772); I, letters 35, 47, 58 and 76, have evident anticlerical and anti-Calvinist overtones. In letter 77 Holberg declares in Lockean vein that *the* fundamental article of faith is the claim of the New Testament that Jesus is the Christ, and that this offers an excellent basis for the reunion of major churches and minor sects.

<sup>149</sup> [P. van Woensel] *De lantaarn* (1792), 118–137; *VL* 1792-i, 531–532.

<sup>150</sup> Far more radical was *De Rotterdamsche Rhapsodist*, Rotterdam 1776; according to the *NB* 1776-i, 695–701, it was written in Voltairean vein. Also reputed to be somewhat critical was *De denkende Christen*, Rotterdam 1783; the reviewer in *NB* 1783-i, 313–317, appreciated only an essay on obedience to the government.

<sup>151</sup> Known contributors to *De Rhapsodist* were P.J. Uylenbroek, Johannes Lublink, Simon de Vries.

<sup>152</sup> *De Denker* I (1764), 153–160, 185–192, 233–240. On this periodical, see Vuyk, *Verlichte verzen en kolommen*, 74–97.

the burning of heretical books, pleaded for freedom of inquiry with a view to uniting Christianity, used excerpts from Marmontel's *Bélisaire* to argue for religious liberty, and rebuked Voltaire for his intolerance—as if a deist could teach a Christian the meaning of forbearance!<sup>153</sup> The first volume of *The Rhapsodist* contained an almost literal translation of the relatively conservative *Encyclopédie* article on 'Tolérance' by the Swiss minister Jean-Edmé Romilly (1739–1779). Demonstrating the reasonableness and necessity of tolerance, Romilly adapted Bayle's *Commentaire philosophique*, insisting (with Montesquieu) that it is not at all certain that unity of faith is best for the state. Religious plurality is perfectly in order as long as atheism is avoided, and it is in any case useless to strive for a perfection humanity will never attain.<sup>154</sup>

Cornelis van Engelen (c. 1722–1793), who had worked as Stinstra's successor at Harlingen, was one of the most ardent spectatorial journalists. Besides working on *The Thinker*, he was a collaborator of *The Philanthropist* and *The Rhapsodist*, and the editor of *The Philosopher*. *The Philosopher* had the gall to publish an anonymous letter arguing that mutual forbearance was a necessary corollary of the doctrine of predestination. Is Calvinism necessarily opposed to toleration, should toleration really be limited, and is toleration at all conducive to social harmony? Unfortunately, the spectator folded before the writer could answer the second and third questions. As to the first, he argued that the orthodox teachings of the Reformed Church justified and even necessitated toleration. In fact, the articles of Dort in particular required that Remonstrants, against whom the articles had been drawn up in the first place, ought to be forborne without persecution within the Reformed Church itself. For according to Calvinism, everything that happens has been foreordained to happen by divine decree. Evidently, God has also commanded that there must be herodox people in the church. Who will dare to withstand God's own directive? Moreover, since God has already predestined everyone to salvation or damnation anyway, the attempt to purify the church of heretics is wholly superfluous. The writer thus demonstrated that the

<sup>153</sup> *De Denker* I (1764), 377–384 and II (1765), 289–296 (on clerical lust for power, by 'T.U.');

III (1766), 233–240 (on heretical books); VI (1769), 129–136 (on unity); VII (1770), 89–96 (on religious liberty); XII (1775), 321–328 (on Voltaire, with reference to his *Traité sur la tolérance*).

<sup>154</sup> *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts en des métiers*, vol. 33, 591–600; *De Rhapsodist* I (1771), 384–412. For an outline of Romilly's article, see Schlüter, *Die französische Toleranzdebatte*, 100–125; Lough, *The Encyclopédie*, 196–270.

articles of Dort were, in fact, doctrines conducive to toleration.<sup>155</sup> *The Rhapsodist* specialized in pithy statements. 'Nothing has caused the shedding of so much blood as the attempt to unite all men in one religion, and yet in theory nothing is easier; one need only compel the clergy to preach as our Saviour did, and all differences between the sects will disappear.' To praise orthodoxy rather than virtue, mysteries instead of argument, and zeal in the place of charity is as shameful as hiding the light under a bushel. 'No heresy or persecution would have entered the church if politicians had not paid the leaders of one sect at the cost of another.'<sup>156</sup>

Another leading spectator was *The Examiner* (*De Onderzoeker*, 1768–1772), continued as *The Observer* (*De Opmerker* 1772–1778), which had a noticeable penchant for Leibniz's philosophy and tended to value doctrine mainly for its usefulness in contributing to moral fulfilment. It has been suggested that Van Goens—then a professor at Utrecht, and aspiring to a position in the magistracy—was connected with these spectators, but a cogent case has also been made out for Johannes Petsch.<sup>157</sup> The *Opmerker* set up a strong argument in favour of freedom of inquiry, but added that church unity and clerical authority require the observance of formularies. A universal church might be possible if all men were philosophers. But this is not the case. Most people (the poor and the uneducated, including labourers, peasants, soldiers and sailors; the well-to-do, including many magistrates; and the greater part of the female sex) are unenlightened and simply accept what is put to them by their spiritual leaders. A philosophical conviction demands more talents, time, and intellectual versatility than most people possess. Abolishing the formularies will lead only to chaos. If people entertain doubts about certain doctrines, they must refrain from discussing them. It is not that formularies should not be open to correction. But changing them is so dangerous and difficult a process that it is better simply to tolerate deficiencies. In the meantime, of course, everyone who

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<sup>155</sup> *De Philosoph* IV (1769), 265–280; the letter was written by 'T.B.V.D.M.W.' to an (unnamed) Calvinist friend. The argument was hardly new, of course. Cf. Drieberge, in: *Aenmerkingen*, 19–26: a precise knowledge of doctrinal points will not help those who are predestined to damnation anyway, though they may otherwise surpass the elect in 'knowledge, enlightenment, ardour and zeal'.

<sup>156</sup> *De Rhapsodist* V (1779), 493–494.

<sup>157</sup> Zwaneveld, 'De Opmerker/Onderzoeker'; Jongenelen, 'Een optimistische dinosaurus'.



recognizes the supreme Head of the universal church should be accepted as a brother, even if he happens to belong to another denomination.<sup>158</sup> Evidently, even elitist republicans made use of moral weeklies to disseminate their pragmatic conservatism.

#### 7.4 VEHICLES OF POLITENESS (I): REASONABLENESS

Isaac Watts, who, as we shall see, deeply influenced Dutch evangelicals, was celebrated in the Netherlands for his *Improvement of the mind* (1761). The book contained methodical instructions on how to obtain and communicate useful knowledge on religion, science, and society.<sup>159</sup> One of the leading clerical advocates of Christian Wolff's philosophy in the Netherlands, Petrus Nieuwland, had been happy to append a foreword to the book, in which he stressed the importance of utility and reasonable philosophy. This middling stance is often regarded as characteristic of the 'Dutch Enlightenment', a phenomenon usually qualified as 'Protestant' or even 'reformational', and defined in terms of a 'moderate' balance between Reason and Revelation. But why the balance, why the moderation?

The orthodox divines who controlled the confessional public sphere had often taken recourse to Reason. The Cartesio-Cocceians in particular were always eager to counter atheism by emphasizing that man possessed an innate idea of God. As Anthony Collins cautioned, this should not deceive us,

For having once established this Tenet, That there are innate Principles, it put their Followers upon a necessity of receiving some Doctrines as such; which was to take them off from their own use of Reason and Judgement, and put them upon believing and taking them upon trust, without further examination (. . .).<sup>160</sup>

Which is exactly what Taco Hajo van den Honert did in *The real ways in which God acts towards man* (1706).<sup>161</sup> He derived a concatenation of natural truths from the Cartesian doubt, which led man irrevocably to 'Revelation, which then enjoined the Calvinist con-

<sup>158</sup> *De Opmerker* (1772–1773), I, 57–64, 89–96.

<sup>159</sup> First issued as *Logic, or the right use of reason in the enquiry after truth* (1725); D.tr. *Verhandeling over de oeffening en beschaaving van 't verstand* (1762).

<sup>160</sup> Quoted in Miller, "Freethinking" and "Freedom of Thought", 607.

<sup>161</sup> Van den Honert, *De waarachtige wegen*.

fessions upon him, which in turn were closely guarded by Van den Honert and his colleagues. Moreover, rationalism in its deist or Spinozist versions had been a key instrument in clandestine opposition to confessionalism. The decline of confessionalism in the course of the century obviated (though hardly destroyed) the need for hard-nosed rationalist criticism.

As the nation-wide, communal effort of a new intellectual elite, the polite public was premised on accessibility, intelligibility, and at least the semblance of denominational neutrality. Reasonableness in general and the reasonableness of Christianity in particular became vehicles of polite communication, affording a common point of departure for all who participated in public debate.<sup>162</sup> Hence the need for a balance between Reason and Revelation. If eighteenth-century discourse on the eve of the nation state was inconceivable without its Christian roots, it was no less unthinkable without its assumptions concerning the free use of reason. We have seen in this chapter that sincerity was seen as one of the fundamental moral attributes of the polite public, and that polite sociability and literary exchange were premised on the liberty to develop, and give public expression to, sincere inward convictions. This section is dedicated to reasonableness as the *sine qua non* of communication, as a vehicle of politeness.

Reasonableness invariably implied, first, acceptance of scepticism and, secondly, a plea for freedom of inquiry. If deists taught scepticism, this did not mean that scepticism was bad.<sup>163</sup> 'He who has never doubted has only a small share in the truth', announced the ladies Wolff and Deken.<sup>164</sup> He who knows how to doubt, they continued, also knows that the reasonable religion is clear and simple. The deists know that they are unable to undermine the many proofs of the truth of Christianity and so, in order to attract the public attention on which they thrive, they unreasonably spurn what they cannot disprove.<sup>165</sup> We have already seen how Samuel Clarke's views

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<sup>162</sup> For related developments in philosophy and toleration theory, cf. O'Neill, 'The public use of reason'.

<sup>163</sup> Cf. the essay competition at Teyler's Theological Society on 'the foolishness of scepticism, the unreasonableness of deciding by authority, and the middle way between both'; the entries were published in *Verhandelingen TGG VII*. Van Himbergen, 'De prijsvragen van de twee genootschappen 1778–1978'.

<sup>164</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Brieven over verscheiden onderwerpen* II, 116–123; Jerusalem is also generously praised in II, 134 and III, 1; Niemeyer in III, 279.

<sup>165</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Willem Leevend*, Part II, 13–14 (Letter VI).

on 'fittingness' and free inquiry were brought to bear on the Dutch toleration debate.<sup>166</sup> A further illustration of the significance of 'reasonableness' in polite discourse can be gauged in part by the influence exerted by the philosophy of Christian Wolff (1679–1754) on the most traditional group of all, the Calvinist clergy.

It took some time before Wolffian philosophy began to make headway. The Dutch Newtonian school founded by the enormously influential Willem Jacob 's Gravesande in the 1730s and 1740s formally canonized the experimental method, while academics still primarily sought philosophical succour in Cartesianism. Exceptions to the rule were the academies at Groningen and Franeker. When in 1728 the Swiss Nicolaus Engelhard (1696–1765) moved from Duisburg to Groningen, he initiated a period of intense but independent Wolffianism at Groningen university.<sup>167</sup> Like Wolff himself at Halle, Engelhard underwent scathing comments from pietist quarters—in this case represented largely by Antonius Driessen, who had read Joachim Lange's diatribes against Wolff and berated the new philosophy for its Cabbalism and its fatalism. Engelhard was not put off. He happily translated the Leibniz-Clarke correspondence into Latin, and elsewhere pointed out that even Calvin defended the *mundus optimus*. At Franeker, the Swiss Samuel Koenig (1712–1757) waved the Wolffian sceptre for some time during the 1740s; an outstanding pupil, the Frisian Antonius Brugmans (1732–1789), succeeded him.<sup>168</sup> Both attempted to mediate between Newton and Wolff. Koenig left Franeker for The Hague in 1748 to teach philosophy and natural law at the Stadtholder's court. In due course Wolffian philosophy was introduced also at other universities. At Leiden, for example, Johannes Lulofs (1711–1768) made good use of Wolff's metaphysics. Wolff himself declined an invitation to teach at Utrecht in 1740, preferring to return to Halle in triumph at the invitation of Frederick II. In the meantime, the non-academic public profited from the spate of translations of Wolff's books that appeared between 1738 and 1745.<sup>169</sup> Jean Deschamps, a French popularizer of Wolff's writings, was able to observe that he had met several Wolffian proselytes in Amsterdam society around 1745.

<sup>166</sup> See the introduction to Chapter 4.

<sup>167</sup> On Engelhard, see Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 103–109.

<sup>168</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 108–114.

<sup>169</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 115–123.

In due course Wolffianism began to make advances among theologians as well. At Franeker Henricus Bernsau (1717–1763), a German who had studied at Duisburg and Marburg, argued in four tomes that Wolffian natural theology accorded rather well with Reformed divinity.<sup>170</sup> True, Bernsau had been appointed at Franeker to attract German students, not to teach Wolffianism, and his books were remaindered even before he died. Nevertheless, others soon recognized that Wolff's ruminations on the problem of freedom and determinism were applicable to theology. A Lutheran clergyman, discussing predestination from a Wolffian point of view in 1747, included a chapter from the *Usus philosophiae Leibnitiae et Wolfianae in theologia* (1728) by the Tübingen professor Israel Gottlieb Canz (1690–1753).<sup>171</sup> Growing criticism gave away the increasing popularity of Wolffian philosophy. Following the Lisbon earthquake of 1756, the Mennonite Hulshoff, who, ironically, had been educated by the Wolffian Engelhard at Groningen, adamantly refuted the idea that man lives in the best of all possible worlds. Hulshoff argued that the Wolffian system undermined human freedom, supported universal determinism, denied the cause-and-effect relation between a virtuous life and the afterlife, contradicted the possibility of miracles, and claimed that God's general goodness and wisdom were the sole divine attributes. A good friend of Van der Marck, Hulshoff yet strongly opposed the Calvinist flirt with Wolffian determinism. He and his fellow critics may have feared that if the Reformed obtained a new philosophical foundation for their theology, similar to the way they had previously appropriated Aristotle and Descartes, a new scholastic 'hierarchy' might be established.<sup>172</sup> In 1760 the *Vaderlandsche Letter-Oefeningen* expressed its amazement at the popularity of Wolff among Reformed divines, for although predestinarianism seemed to be borne out by the *harmonia praestabilita*, Calvinist views on divine omnipotence were in flagrant contradiction to the principle of sufficient reason (which bound God's will by obliging him to make specific choices).<sup>173</sup>

<sup>170</sup> *Theologia dogmatica methodo scientifica pertractata* (1745–1761).

<sup>171</sup> Johan Frederik Broens († 1782), *Godts redelijkste vrijmacht en onafhankelijkheid in zijn (...) raadsbesluit* (1747).

<sup>172</sup> Hulshoff's book, which he had originally intended to publish under the title of *Anti-théodicée* or *Baylius rediwivus*, was well-received in a review by the anti-Wolffian Merian in the *Nouvelle Bibliothèque Germanique*; Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 125–127.

<sup>173</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 127. Pantheism was another objection; cf. *Oordeelkundige bedenkingen over het uitmuntend onderscheid dat 'er in de waereld is tusschen enkele*

Comments on the fatalism supposedly inherent in Wolffian philosophy were duly countered in 1763–1764 by the Leibniz translations of Johannes Petsch (1711–1795). Born at Bergen in Norway, Petsch studied theology in Copenhagen where, despite his pietist leanings, he soon became acquainted with Wolffianism. He joined the Moravian community at Marienborn in 1742, and later became a preacher among the Herrnhuters at Zeist. Feeling increasingly less at ease with untamed Moravian emotionalism during the ‘time of the sifting’, Petsch withdrew from the *Brüdergemeinde*, although he never severed his contacts.<sup>174</sup> After 1754 Petsch, who had apparently set aside some money, settled down as a writer and the translator of Leibniz’s *Theodicée* (1763–1764). He retaliated against Hulshoff’s condemnation of Wolffian optimism and tried to present Wolffianism as a distinctly Christian philosophy that sailed between the Scylla of enthusiasm and the Charybdis of deism.<sup>175</sup> In his apologies, Petsch explicitly linked philosophical determinism with the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Even the orthodox Calvinist minister Anthonie van Hardeveldt was able to observe that Petsch’s views were, indeed, astonishingly similar to those of the Reformed.<sup>176</sup> Looking back on the theological developments of two decades, Martinet remarked that Arminianism was declining in Germany and elsewhere because of Wolffian philosophy. Wolff, he explained, had substantially reduced the philosophical objections against the Reformed doctrine of predestination.<sup>177</sup>

Thus, in unison with the rapid expansion of the polite public during the 1760s, Wolffian philosophy began to attract divines on a large scale. Even that timorous mouthpiece of piecemeal reform in the public church, the *Boekzaal*, spoke highly of him in 1767.<sup>178</sup> The

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*bestaanlykheden en de zelstandigheden* [*Judicious considerations on the outstanding differences in the world between several entities and essences*] (1764), a rejection of both Spinoza and Wolff. A writer in *De Philosoph* IV (1769), 270–271, criticized the opportunistic use which Reformed divines made of Wolffian philosophy to defend predestination; according to the critic they embroidered on the *decretum permissivum* (the divine decree that permits something to happen in accordance with divine prescience), an idea that led directly to the Jesuit-Arminian doctrine of ‘mediate knowledge’.

<sup>174</sup> Peucker, ‘s *Heerendijk*, 166.

<sup>175</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 127–131; Petsch had read German Wolffians like Bilfinger, Gottsched, Stapfer, Wytenbach Sr., and Canz.

<sup>176</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 127 note 54.

<sup>177</sup> Martinet, *Historie der waereld*, V, 84–85.

<sup>178</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 123 note 31. The *Boekzaal* had earlier (1751) included a positive review of a Dutch translation of Friedrich Christian Baumeister’s Wolffian *Institutiones philosophiae rationalis* (1735); D.tr. *Logica of redeneerkunde*, Amsterdam 1747.

influence of Wolffian philosophy on orthodox divines is a significant but little-known aspect of Dutch religious life. Divines usually learnt about the utility of Wolff's philosophy from translations of German Wolffians. We have already encountered the Wolffian Goeze several times. Another German was Johann Ernst Schubert (1717–1774), whose *Gedanken von der Freiheit der menschlichen Seele* (1763) was valued by the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* because it respected both Reason and Revelation.<sup>179</sup> Schubert was a Lutheran theology professor and Swedish *Consistorialrat* who combined pronounced Wolffian sympathies with unquestionable orthodoxy, 'der Held der meisten Lutherischen Geistlichen dieses Landes,' according to a German observer in the Republic.<sup>180</sup> The titles of Schubert's books often began with the phrase 'Vernünfftige und schriftmäßige Gedanken (. . .)' He provided the Dutch with a vast series of orthodox apologies on angels, inspiration, redemption, sacraments, eschatology, and other traditional theological topics. His book on the Trinity was hailed as one of his best, partly because it also rejected universal toleration.<sup>181</sup> The Swiss Johann Friedrich Stapfer (1708–1775) was another popular Wolffian of the old school, who had the additional advantage of being Reformed.<sup>182</sup> Zacharias H. Alewijn (1742–1788), a jurist who defended the orthodox *Advocate* in the 1770s, had learned to appreciate Leibniz through Stapfer's work.<sup>183</sup> Lutherans, however, were just as popular. Johann Andreas Buttstett (1701–1765), a theology professor at Erlangen and a prolific orthodox Wolffian, produced a number of doctrinal studies translated in the 1760s.<sup>184</sup> Another Erlangen theologian who harmonized Reason and Revelation in Wolffian vein was Georg Friedrich Seiler (1733–1807), ecclesiastical counsellor of the *Markgraf*

<sup>179</sup> J.E. Schubert, *Gedachten over de vrijheid der menschelijke ziele* (1774); translated by Johan Martin Wild; review in *NB* 1775-i, 606–610.

<sup>180</sup> *Deutsches Museum*, II, 1776, 697; most of Schubert's books appeared in the later 1760s and 1770s.

<sup>181</sup> J.E. Schubert, *Vernünfftige und schriftmäßige Gedanken von der göttlichen Dreifaltigkeit* (1751); D.tr. *Rede-kundige en schriftuurlijke gedachten over de goddelijke drieëenheid* (1774), tr. by the Dutch Lutheran minister Johann Friedrich Schlosser (1736–1826) and supervised by the Wolffian Jan Mulder. The reviewer in *NB* 1775-i, 3–12, regretted only Schubert's emphasis on universal grace.

<sup>182</sup> E.g. J.F. Stapfer, *Grundlegung zur wahren Religion* (1746–1753); D.tr. *De grondlegging tot den waaren godsdienst* (1762).

<sup>183</sup> Wille, *Van Goens*, I, 63.

<sup>184</sup> Including a conservative defence of the mysteries: J.A. Buttstett, *Vernünfftige Gedanken über die Geheimnisse der Christen überhaupt* (1735); D.tr. *Redenkundige gedachten over de verborgenheden der Christenen in 't algemeen* (1764).

of Brandenburg-Anhalt-Culmbach-Bareuth; a 'very *orthodox* Lutheran Divine', though more tolerant than Goeze, as a contemporary noted.<sup>185</sup> The society 'Diversity and Concord' (*Verscheidenheid en Overeenstemming*) founded in 1760 at Rotterdam as the first non-specialist scientific society in the Netherlands, had marked Wolffian leanings.<sup>186</sup> Any irenicist would have approved of the society's name, and indeed one of the statutes commanded that disputed articles of faith were not to be discussed. Although membership was open to Lutherans, until well into the 1780s all members were Reformed, including a large number of orthodox clergymen.<sup>187</sup> The general interests of the members were apologetic, and many, like Jan Scharp, had a penchant for Wolffian philosophy.<sup>188</sup>

In terms of influence, the *Abt* Jerusalem probably outclassed all other clerical followers of Wolff. His *Sammlung einiger Predigten* (1745), translated in 1767, included Christian Wolff's foreword to the French edition of the sermons.<sup>189</sup> The translator, Balthasar Carull, was a Dutch Lutheran merchant based in Amsterdam who sympathized with the theological renewal in Germany. Jerusalem's fan club was not limited to dissenters. Boswell obtained a letter of recommendation, written by no one less than Baron Bentinck, 'for the Abbé Jerusalem, a worthy man who has all the good nature, the affability, and the modesty of a child, with the most deep and sublime study and the most refined taste. The [sc. at] first sight you will find him backward, but if you talk with him, I am sure you will love him.'<sup>190</sup> By the time Jerusalem was made a member of the Holland Society of Sciences in 1775, he had achieved fame as the author of the immensely popular *Betrachtungen über die vornehmsten Wahrheiten der Religion* (1774–1779).<sup>191</sup> Betje Wolff, for one, valued the work highly.<sup>192</sup> By 1790,

<sup>185</sup> G.F. Seiler, *Kurze Apologie des Christenthums* (1776); *Korte verdaadiging van het Christendom* (1786), tr. by M. van Werkhoven with a preface by Johannes van Laar (both orthodox laymen); a very positive review in *NB* 1786-i, 149–158. The qualification of Seiler as orthodox in *Drie brieven van Janus Phileusebius*, 43 note.

<sup>186</sup> Barger, *Scharp*, 114–117; Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 143–157.

<sup>187</sup> Thus Jacob Nuys van Klinkenberg was a member. Several leading members left the society in 1785 on account of its pro-Patriot course.

<sup>188</sup> A favourable review of a publication by the society in *NB* 1780-i, 415–418; the reviewer appreciated the fact that the society sought formal church approbation.

<sup>189</sup> Cf. *VL* 1768-i, 361; *Verzameling van leerredenen* [Collection of sermons], Amsterdam 1767.

<sup>190</sup> Pottle, *Boswell in Holland*, 267; written for Boswell in June 1764.

<sup>191</sup> Translated as *Verhandelingen over de voornaamste waarheden van den godsdienst* (1773–1781).

<sup>192</sup> *Briefwisseling van Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken*, 297 and 310. The reviewer in *NB*

the editors of the Reformed *Vaderlandsche Bibliotheek* could ascertain to their satisfaction that 'all able lovers of our reasonable Religion' had great respect for the man who, according to an inscription in the *Klosterkirche* of Riddagshausen, first established *Aufklärung* in Brunswick.<sup>193</sup> A paragon of clerical moderation, Jerusalem demonstrated through his character and his writings how ecclesiastical reform might be achieved.

The most erudite among the Wolffian Calvinists was probably Petrus Nieuwland, the divine who wrote the foreword to Watts' *Improvement of the mind*. A fervently Orangist minister at The Hague, he maintained excellent relations with the Stadtholders William IV and V.<sup>194</sup> His orthodoxy was generally undisputed. Diderot relates how a Walloon minister held a sermon on the goodness of God, in which he denied eternal punishment. Nieuwland stood in a corner of the church, 'où il se mordait les lèvres de rage.'<sup>195</sup> Nieuwland was very conscious of his standing as a clergyman and often defended the clerical establishment against critical pietist laymen. On the other hand, he was not a doctrinal quibbler, but a typical scholar. When he lent support to the doctrine of predestination, he did not analyze it and prove its truth, but demonstrated its age.<sup>196</sup> He was, in other words, an *oordeelkundige*, a literary critic who wrote essays, ranging from Marco Antonio de Dominis and the excellence of the clerical estate<sup>197</sup> to the doctrinal vagueness of Erasmus and the origins of the word 'Catholic'.<sup>198</sup> In his *Otia exegetica*, Nieuwland published manuscripts by his former teacher Van Irhoven on the three arch-heretics Van Leenhof, Van Hattem and Van Deurhoff, showing that their views were deterministic and conformed to Spinozism.<sup>199</sup> He intended this as a contribution to impartial *Ketzergeschichte*, after Mosheim's example. He also published the learned correspondence he maintained with contemporaries. Thus, in a letter to his colleague and friend David Kleman (1725–1780), he discussed Locke's *Essay*

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1782-i, 265–273, regarded the *Betrachtungen* as excellent, although the book lacked an explicit defence of the exclusive nature of Revelation.

<sup>193</sup> *VB* 1790-ii, 132–134, with a report of the inscription.

<sup>194</sup> On Nieuwland, see Toebes, *Haagse Hervormde historien*, 127–140.

<sup>195</sup> Diderot, *Voyage en Hollande*, 129.

<sup>196</sup> P. Nieuwland, *Letter- en oudheidkundige verlustigingen* [*Literary and antiquarian diversions*] (1765–1769), II, 193–198.

<sup>197</sup> Nieuwland, *Letter- en oudheidkundige verlustigingen*, IV, 89–135, 595–601.

<sup>198</sup> Nieuwland, *Otia exegetica*, 2 vols, The Hague 1773–1775, II, 452–453, 512–522.

<sup>199</sup> Nieuwland, *Otia exegetica*, II, Book I.



concerning human understanding; so excellent a book, as he observed, that it still managed to prevent chauvinist Englishmen from opening their minds to the German Wolff.<sup>200</sup> As a 'reasonable' Wolffian, Nieuwland was a firm opponent of the irrational emotionalism and passivity advocated by orthodox pietists; he included an anti-pietist essay on melancholy in his *Otia exegetica*.<sup>201</sup> In the 1770s, this anti-pietist position induced him to oppose the ecclesiastical campaign against Kleman, much to the surprise of his colleague Petrus Hofstede (who, as we saw, had supported Nieuwland as a candidate for the ministry in Rotterdam). Nieuwland regarded the procedures against Kleman, which came to nothing because the States of Holland forbade further discussion, as an attempt to 'introduce synodal authority into the church.' He associated clerical authority with the passiveness of melancholic and submissive pietists.<sup>202</sup>

Kleman was accused of Pelagianism.<sup>203</sup> Influenced by Wolff's philosophy, Kleman had attempted to apply the *lex continuitatis* to the Reformed order of salvation. His *Order of salvation* (1774), which received some coverage in Germany, dealt with the relationship between grace and duty.<sup>204</sup> Kleman argued that God had ordained a connection between the free bestowal of grace and the correct use of man's natural powers, insofar as the moral instruction of the Gospel had improved these powers. As long as an individual abided by his duty to make proper use of the means of grace, he could be

<sup>200</sup> Nieuwland, *Otia exegetica*, II, 327–350.

<sup>201</sup> Nieuwland, *Otia exegetica*, II, 426–432.

<sup>202</sup> Schutte, 'Beschermer van Gods kerk', 145. In a personal conversation with Willem V (who regretted the ecclesiastical policy regarding Kleman), Hofstede noted that he had always known Nieuwland as an orthodox theologian, but that he had now apparently changed his doctrinal 'system'. Hofstede communicated this to Nieuwland, and a quarrel between them ensued. To contemporaries the relationship between 'enthusiasm' (or 'fanaticism') and authoritarianism was an evident one. In 1781 Nieuwland reissued a study by Kleman on psychology (first printed in 1765) which clearly shows Wolffian influence.

<sup>203</sup> Among others by the orthodox pietist Johannes Conradus Appellius (1715–1798). For the following, see De Groot, 'David Kleman', 194–219.

<sup>204</sup> *De orde des heils of verband tusschen genade en plicht* [*Order of salvation or connection between grace and obligation*] (1774); tr. into German as *Abhandlung über die Ordnung des Heils* (1775), by a writer who had earlier rallied anonymously to Kleman's support; on this anonymous author's Wolffian reasoning, see De Groot, 'David Kleman', 207, 215. Apparently this author was a pupil of Van der Marck at Lingen; cf. *NB* 1776-i, 390–401. In a review of the German translation, no one less than J.A. Ernesti noted that Kleman's views resembled the Lutheran doctrine of universal grace; see *NB* 1777-ii, 300–307.

certain that God would meet him halfway.<sup>205</sup> Kleman, in effect, contradicted the predestinarian passivity of the *fijnen*, although his emphasis on a stage preceding the bestowal of particular grace, a stage at which the individual had to make use of his natural powers, seemed at best semi-Pelagian. His claim was all the more shocking in that it was made so soon after Van der Marck's philosophical subversion of the doctrine of grace. Kleman was confuted in a pamphlet called *The truth robbed of its lustre by Wolff's philosophy; in his machine-like world; through which Arminius relives* (1775), a title which pretty much summarized the objections of the pietist old guard.<sup>206</sup> Kleman believed that methodical theological research would firmly establish the confessions (to which he pledged his loyalty) and put an end to religious dissension (which he qualified as 'moral madness').<sup>207</sup> The periodical press classified Kleman among those Reformed divines inclined to interpret established doctrine with moderation, in contrast to those who maintained it inflexibly.<sup>208</sup> This was a reference to a group of divines who sought to counter the pietist emphasis on total depravity and predestination with an evangelical 'offer of grace'. Later, with the rise of evangelical piety, more than one Reformed divine simplified traditional Calvinism to the advice, 'Christ is being offered to you and it is your duty to accept him; do so and you will be saved.' Regarded by some as followers of the German new reformers, they were often called the 'new lights'.<sup>209</sup>

<sup>205</sup> De Groot, 'David Kleman', 213–214, notes that Kleman may have read the *Tentamen theologiae dogmaticae methodo scientifica pertractae* (1747–1749) by the Wolffian dogmatician Daniel Wytenbach Sr. (1706–1779), an orthodox theology professor at Bern who had tried to combine human freedom and divine grace in a similar manner.

<sup>206</sup> [Anon.], *De waarheid van zijn luister berooft door de filosofie van Wolf* (1775).

<sup>207</sup> De Groot, 'David Kleman', 208 note. Kleman had read writings by Werenfels, whose *Opuscula theologica* (1772) included 'Theses de gratia convertente, in quibus protestantes convenire possunt'. A contemporary series of essays on the relations between Reason and Revelation in *VL* 1772-ii, 1–10, 41–54, 91–102, made use of writings by Kleman, Werenfels, Statius Muller, Grotius, Conradi, and Turretini.

<sup>208</sup> Cf. *VL* 1775-i, 109.

<sup>209</sup> Cf. Casper Frederik Hachenberg (c. 1710–1793), the director of a Latin school at Wageningen, whose *Vertoog over de welmeenende aanbieding van genade en zaligheid* [*Discourse on the well-meaning offer of grace and salvation*] (1774), was reviewed positively in the *NB* 1775-i, 292–295, although the reviewer noted that he argued in Kleman's vein. Later orthodox responses to the 'new lights' included *Onderzoek of 'er in onze dagen in de kerk van Christus een nieuw licht ontstoken is* [*Inquiry whether in our days a new light has been lit in Christ's church*] (1787), by Cornelis van der Palm (1730–1789), the director of a school in Rotterdam, who had pronounced pedagogical interests; 'A.V.'

The Kleman affair itself caused a substantial controversy in the Reformed Church. Few dared to support him openly. Apart from Petsch, he was overtly defended by Johannes Eusebius Voet (1706–1778); others, like Nicolaus Barkey, sympathized with him.<sup>210</sup> Schultens covertly supported Kleman, as did Petrus Curtenius (1716–1789), a Cocceian professor at the *Athenaeum* in Amsterdam since 1754.<sup>211</sup> Voet, a civil servant, had been educated as a physician, but is remembered mostly for his contributions to the new psalm-book.<sup>212</sup> Kleman, whose theological views he shared, had apparently introduced him to Wolffian philosophy. In his *Means given by God to obtain spiritual taste* (1774), Voet, too, contended that God ordained a necessary connection between salvation and the use of the means of grace.<sup>213</sup> Nicolaus Barkey (1709–1788), another of Kleman's supporters, was a 'High' German Calvinist minister in The Hague and, like Nieuwland, an erudite *oordeekundige*. He provoked a controversy in 1774 by translating and defending Johann F. Jacobi's interpretation of the Song of Songs.<sup>214</sup> Jacobi, yet another relatively orthodox Lutheran with

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[Abdius Velingius?], *Bedenkingen over de nieuwerwetse leerwyze van euangelische waarheden* [*Considerations concerning the new-fangled teaching of Gospel truths*] [c. 1792]; Jan de Vries, *Gemeenzaame gesprekken over de voornaamste leerstukken van den Christen godsdienst* [*Informal conversations on the principal doctrines of the Christian religion*] (1792). On the rise of evangelical piety, see section 7.5.

<sup>210</sup> De Groot, 'David Kleman', 202–203. Another defender of Kleman was Johannes Heringa.

<sup>211</sup> *Brieven aan R.M. van Goens*, 9 (letter to Van Goens, 1776). A preface by the theologian Brouerius Broes to a collection of sermons (1790–1793) by Curtenius provoked an enormous controversy, in which Broes was explicitly compared with Steinbart, Doederlein, Priestley, and Marmontel; Broes had used a phrasing that smacked of anti-Trinitarianism.

<sup>212</sup> Bosch, *En nooit meer oude Psalmen zingen*, 149–153, also 119–147. Voet's poetry resembled that of his close friend Rutger Schutte (1708–1784), another contributor to the new psalmody; Schutte developed from an orthodox supporter of Dort into a more 'evangelical' writer who put less emphasis on predestinarian piety and more on conversion and sanctification.

<sup>213</sup> J.E. Voet, *Gods geschonken middelen tot verkrijginge van den geestelijken smaak* (1774). Voet's 'experimental' defence of Christianity (the truth of Christendom is proved by inner experience, not by authority) was appreciated as an ecumenical apology; cf. the review of Voet, *De godlykheid van den bybel, gestaafd door de proefondervindinge* [*The divinity of the Bible proven by experiment*] (1773); in *VL* 1773-i, 310–312.

<sup>214</sup> J.F. Jacobi, *Das (...) gerettete hohe Lied* (1771); D.tr. *Het Hooge-lied (...) van de bezwaaren, tegen het zelve ingebragd, vrygesprooken* (1774); a severe review in *NB* 1774/II-i, 107–110. Jacobi had written a *Quo sensu hic mundus sit optimus* (1734); it is not clear whether Barkey had Wolffian leanings. Barkey had earlier introduced *Unterredungen zwischen einem Hofmanne und einem Geistlichen* (1768), an anti-deist work by a Danish divine, Friedrich Karl Lange (1738–1791); D.tr. *Samenspraaken, tusschen een' kamer-heer*

Wolffian leanings, had denied the Song's mystical sense, an interpretation not appreciated by orthodox Reformed divines like Hofstede.<sup>215</sup> Incidentally, writings associated with Solomon were popular among reputed Wolffians. Sara Burgerhart, the protagonist in one of Betje Wolff's novels, was usually buried in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, books rejected as legalistic by pietists.<sup>216</sup>

The pervasive influence of 'Wolffianism' in eighteenth-century Dutch religious life remains to be examined. The impact of Wolffian philosophy naturally extended far beyond orthodox Reformed Church leaders. The journalist Elie Luzac combated the sensualism of French philosophers like d'Alembert and Rousseau in his *Nederlandsche Letter-Courant* (1759–1763) by making propaganda for Wolffianism, and published an annotated French translation of Wolff's *Grundsätze des Natur- und Völckerrechts* in 1772. Luzac was not particularly orthodox, but he does not seem to have had any subversive religious aims either. The contrary is true for the writer of *My diversions* (1777), who pointedly used a passage from one of Wolff's translated books as his motto and proceeded to take great liberties in eloquent diatribes against the intolerance of the Calvinist clergy.<sup>217</sup> Above all, the adapted Wolffianism of the so-called *Popularphilosophen* exerted considerable influence; Dutch translations appeared of writings by Formey, Engel, and Mendelssohn. Thoughtful criticism was voiced by Georg Friedrich Meier, professor of philosophy at Halle, whose *Philosophische Betrachtungen über die christliche Religion* (1761–1767) were greatly admired, and published in Dutch in eight volumes.<sup>218</sup> Meier's purpose was to demonstrate the harmony between Christianity and reason on the basis of the new insights provided by contemporary philosophy. He argued

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*en een' hof-prediker* (1770); Barkey here denied the canonicity of both the Song and Revelations; see *NB* 1774/II-i, 49. Barkey also translated *Die Religion, die Seele eines Staates* by Karl Friedrich Wegener (1734–1782), a Lutheran pastor, poet and publicist at Berlin; D.tr. *Dat de godsdienst de ziel van den staat zy* (1767).

<sup>215</sup> A still later addition to the debate was *Das hohe Lied Salomos* (1775) by Johann Balthasar Lüderwald (1722–1796), a prolific Lutheran cleric from Brunswick who put the Song in its historical context; D.tr. *Het Hooglied van Salomo geschiedkundig en gegronnd verklaard* (1780).

<sup>216</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Sara Burgerhart*, Letter 7. Cf. Letter 10, where Sara says: 'the wise King Solomon is my man'; we should enjoy both life and labour. Another Wolffian, Bilderdijk, held similar views; see Van Eijnatten, *Hogere sferen*, 83–111. Another example is P.L. Stadius Muller, *De wysheit Salomons*, Leeuwarden 1751 (a moral weekly).

<sup>217</sup> [Anon.], *Mijne uitspanningen* (1777); review in *NB* 1778-i, 254–265.

<sup>218</sup> D.tr. G.F. Meier, *Philosophische aanmerkingen ontrent de Christelyke religie* (1763–1770).

that religious diversity rather than unanimity was central to the providential scheme. The first volume contained several comments on freedom of inquiry and the power of superstition over the mind of man, emphasizing, as one reviewer was pleased to observe, that Christians should not only be permitted to think freely, but ought to do so of their own accord.<sup>219</sup> An orthodox reviewer criticized Meier's *Philosophische Sittenlehre* (1753–1761), prefaced by the Dordrecht divine Petrus Brouwer (1732–1802), because it did not present a moral philosophy based on reason alone. It should have been called 'Philosophical examination of Christian Morality.'<sup>220</sup> In 1789, Betje Wolff rendered into Dutch the first volume of Christian Garve's annotated German translation of Cicero's *De officiis*. The book was, however, a dismal failure; after eight years, the publisher had hardly sold a copy.<sup>221</sup> Apart from Hennert and Van der Voort, the best authority on *Popularphilosophie* was probably the philosopher Bernard Nieuhoff (1747–1831),<sup>222</sup> professor at Harderwijk, and an earnest Patriot. Originally a German from Lingen, Nieuhoff studied theology and philosophy at Leiden, read Wolff, Kant, Mendelssohn, Herder, and Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, and closely monitored the *Pantheismustreit* following Lessing's death. A typical *Popularphilosoph* himself, he emphasized anthropological and ethical themes in his own work.

Wolffianism, then, catered to a variety of philosophical and theological positions, and in many ways fostered reasonableness and intellectual liberty as preconditions of polite communication. If reasonableness represented a moral value to contemporaries, we can now see it as a useful tool enabling intellectual intercourse in the polite public, rather than as merely a symptom of 'Christian Enlightenment.' The same can to all purposes be said for evangelical piety.

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<sup>219</sup> VL 1763-i, 371–378; Gawlick, 'G.F. Meiers Stellung'; Dierse, 'Nachträge zu G.F. Meiers Religionsphilosophie.'

<sup>220</sup> D.tr. G.F. Meier, *Philosophische zedenkunde* (1774), tr. by J.W. van Haar; reviews in NB 1775-i, 442–446; NB 1776-i, 323–328.

<sup>221</sup> D.tr. C. Garve, M.T. Cicero, *Verhandeling over de menschlijke pligten* (1790); Buijnsters, *Wolff & Deken*, 278. The series *Wijsgeerige verhandelingen* [*Philosophical treatises*], Amsterdam 1790, translated and edited by Gerrit van der Voort, opened with an essay by Garve.

<sup>222</sup> Wielema, *Ketters en verlichters*, 159–173.

## 7.5 VEHICLES OF POLITENESS (2): PIETY AND PREACHING

Unlike Jerusalem, who served an absolute ruler, the less traditional Dutch clergy had the misfortune to live in a republic where the pursuit of reform was frustrated by a fragmented sovereignty and a regional church organization. In spite of these daunting odds, the clergy did try to put through some suggestions for reform, as some academic addresses of theology professors demonstrate. In 1752, the Groningen theologians seem to have agreed on the general theme of their orations. Paulus Chevallier inaugurated with an address *De fructibus, qui ex iuste temperata cogitandi libertate in theologum redundant* (1752), while his colleague Ewald Hollebeek, whom we have encountered as one of the Vitringsians, began his own professorial career with *De damnis, quae praeiudicia in rem theologicam inferunt, deque optima iis occurrendi methodo*.<sup>223</sup> Chevallier defended freedom of judgement but also opposed freethinking. He argued that moral considerations (aversion to prejudice and the pursuit of glory or profit) characterize true freedom of thought, which is guided only by strength of argument and desire for truth. Freedom of thought requires respect for certain rules. A ‘free theologian’ does not parrot authorities, but weighs arguments and inquires into the Scriptures himself. He is honest and does not claim fully to understand mysteries. He opposes violence and coercion of conscience. He acknowledges all who help to unveil the truth, even those who do not belong to his own confession. Reason and liberty are valuable goods, if properly governed. Hollebeek in turn deplored the habit of judging matters before they were accurately understood. He deprecated the dissension among theologians and the persecution brought on by prejudice, suggested that piety be exercised in conjunction with charity, peace and forbearance, and pleaded for a theology based on Scripture alone.<sup>224</sup>

Ewald Hollebeek was in all respects an excellent candidate to succeed the controversial Alberti at Leiden in 1761. As the son-in-law of the Groningen professor Gerdes, he had the proper connections in academia and society. He immediately made clear where he stood in an address *De theologo non vere orthodoxo, nisi vere pio*.<sup>225</sup> Schultens

<sup>223</sup> A third divine was Michael Bertling (1710–1772), who inaugurated as theology professor in 1752 with *De modestia, modestaque sapientia, theologo digna, theologo necessaria*.

<sup>224</sup> E. Hollebeek, *De damnis, quae praeiudicia in rem theologicam inferunt* (1752).

<sup>225</sup> E. Hollebeek, *De theologo non vere orthodoxo, nisi vere pio* (1762).

later told the German traveller Beckmann, present at the ceremony, that Hollebeek's positive view of the other confessions would not commend the new professor to the orthodox; his open-heartedness was dangerous.<sup>226</sup> On the surface, Hollebeek's address was conventional and uncontroversial. He was not the first theologian to argue that orthodoxy had to be attended by piety, and which theologian would have denied it? At a time when dissenting critics often claimed piety to be more important than orthodoxy, the choice of the topic alone was bound, however, to raise suspicions. Moreover, divines who were not always beyond suspicion had broached the topic. In 1724 at Franeker, Venema had held an address *De zelo veritatis et pietatis genuino et charitatis pleno*.<sup>227</sup> The Arminian Dierberge inaugurated on a related topic, *De veritatis et pacis studio coniungendo* in 1737, probably taking his cue from Turretini, whose *Orationes academicae* had appeared in the same year.<sup>228</sup> This section will take Hollebeek's address as a point of departure. We shall argue that piety, like reasonableness, enabled communication in the polite public. Mere cerebral convictions did not suffice to mould and integrate a public of polite Christians, if only because not *all* truths derived their persuasiveness from their reasonableness. Moreover, heartfelt convictions were necessary to a proper functioning of polite society because they proved the sincerity of one's status as an independent, self-conscious and responsible Christian. After discussing Hollebeek's views on piety, we shall examine his proposals for preaching reform in connection with the influence in the Netherlands of Watts and Doddridge. Subsequently some comments will be made on the way orthodox evangelicals were able to participate in the new public sphere by virtue of their emphasis on piety.

Hollebeek began his address on piety by observing that everyone regretted the way Christendom had deviated from its pristine beginnings, when doctrines had been few, customs simple, and morals pure. Instead of the small number of excellent and useful doctrines universally accepted in those early years, we are now burdened with

<sup>226</sup> Kernkamp ed., *Johann Beckmann's dagboek*, 387.

<sup>227</sup> His orthodox colleague Albert Melchioris held an address *De necessari veritatis et pietatis coniugio* on the same occasion. Another orthodox address in the same tradition is *De pietate Christiana theologo prorsus necessaria* (1767) by Johannes Ratelband (1715–1793), a theology professor at Franeker.

<sup>228</sup> On Turretini, see section 4.2.

a multitude of sophisticated opinions, which we are enjoined upon to recognize as fundamental truths. Instead of piety, moderation, justice, peace, love and other Christian values, today the most scandalous vices reign. And all this, claimed the speaker before the members of what was still one of the more famous theological faculties of Europe, had been caused by the improper instruction and conduct of those who taught theology at the academies and in the church. How to characterize an orthodox theologian? Obviously, such a theologian does not belong to that bigoted and despicable species who refrains from examining revealed truth and who, with exaggerated respect for his predecessors, simply acquiesces in received doctrines, maintaining and defending them with blind passion, while shamelessly condemning and slandering other confessions. No, a truly orthodox divine has a high regard for Revelation as the fount of truth. He holds only those doctrines as fundamental which are clear, distinct, recurrent and inseparably connected with salvation. He distinguishes between the necessary and the non-necessary, recognizes the limitations of the human understanding, and values the practice of piety as highly as he does dogma. True orthodoxy entails an inward condition. It ought to derive from the ethical truths of the Bible, not from an immoderate passion to protect or foster a faction to which one belongs only by birth or upbringing.<sup>229</sup> This is not a novel view, adds Hollebeek. Heathen authors (Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, among others) have emphasized strongly that truth and piety cannot be separated, and so have many Christians. The Bible itself contains numerous references; one need think only of John 7:17. An essay on James 3:17 in the moderately progressive *Vaderlandsche Bibliotheek* later duplicated Hollebeek's views on the character of the orthodox divine as peaceful, modest, forbearing, impartial, and sincere.<sup>230</sup> This anonymous author referred to authorities ranging from Gregory of Nazianz and Lactantius to Witsius (*De theologo modesto*, 1698), Mosheim (*De theologo non contentioso*),<sup>231</sup> Werenfels (*De recto theologi zelo*, 1722), Turretini

<sup>229</sup> Hollebeek quotes two Swiss latitudinarians, Turretini and Ringier; elsewhere he refers to Grotius and Tillotson.

<sup>230</sup> *VB* 1794-ii, 433-444, 481-492.

<sup>231</sup> A Dutch translation in J.L. Mosheim, *Verklaaring van het Euangelium van Johannes* (1779), 544-672, a translation of *Erklärung des Evangelium Johannis* (1777); Mosheim refers to Tillotson and Turretini. Cf. also Mosheim's *Sittenlehre der heiligen Schrift* (1735); D.tr. *De zedenleer der Heilige Schrift* (1768-1778); the reviewer in *VL* 1773-i, 228-233 singled out Mosheim's comments on charity as a means to concord in



(*De theologo veritatis et pacis studioso*, 1705), and Johann Jakob Zimmermann (*De theologo pacifico et contentioso*).<sup>232</sup> In the 1770s, an orthodox society was founded called *Non placet nobis orthodoxia sine pietate, nec pietas sine orthodoxia*.<sup>233</sup>

The appeal to piety, then, could be used as a solvent for the confessional public sphere, since it downplayed doctrine in favour of inward feelings. For the early eighteenth-century orthodox, ranging from the high Cocceians to the Voetian pietists, piety had been an inward response to the outward maintenance of public religion. Sound piety (in contrast to *bedorven mystikerij* or ‘corrupt mysticism’) had always simultaneously implied acknowledgement of the authoritative claims of the confessional public sphere. By contrast, in the polite public that developed in the 1760s and 1770s, the inward appropriation of religious truth itself began to function as the moral basis of society. Piety reasonable and piety evangelical had become constituents of a new public sphere. Accounts of the lasting influence of ‘pietism’ on ‘Enlightenment’ tend to create a somewhat false sense of continuity by claiming that the ‘warm’ and ‘heartfelt’ piety demonstrated by all good Christians of all ages merged, in the eighteenth century, with ‘progressive’ intellectual views, resulting in a ‘protestant Enlightenment’.<sup>234</sup> The point here is that the polite public was based, not primarily on the preservation of external confessions to which believers were expected to respond inwardly, but on inner convictions as such, irrespective of what formularies, churches, and civil authorities regarded as truth.

The most influential representatives of English evangelical piety were Isaac Watts (1674–1748) and Philip Doddridge (1702–1751).<sup>235</sup> The fact that they were Independents or Congregationalists did not diminish their popularity among those interested in a devotion modified

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vol. IV. On the basis of Matth. 7:18, Mosheim argued that sincere piety implied true faith, and that Christians were obliged to exercise charity with respect to true believers.

<sup>232</sup> In: J.J. Zimmermann, *Opuscula theologici, historici et philosophici argumenti* (1751–1759).

<sup>233</sup> *NB* 1777-i, 481–485; the members of this society attributed the increase in unbelief to the growing disrespect for the clergy.

<sup>234</sup> For the Dutch context, cf. Jan van den Berg, who has often applied the argument in Klaus Scholder’s influential essay on pietism and Enlightenment to the Netherlands, e.g. in his ‘Theology in Franeker and Leiden’, 256. See Scholder, ‘Grundzüge der theologischen Aufklärung’; also Kantzenbach, *Protestantisches Christentum im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*.

<sup>235</sup> Van den Berg and Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge*.

to suit the standards of polite taste. The role played by Doddridge in the Netherlands illustrates how the 'evangelical piety' advocated by religious writers, ranging from heterodox dissenter to orthodox Calvinist, was instrumental in undermining or supplanting the confessional public sphere. Doddridge, to begin with, had a distaste for formularies.<sup>236</sup> He was widely recognised as open, undogmatic, and tolerant, qualities for which his Calvinist colleagues in England criticized him. Moreover, he believed that the preaching of an evangelical, experiential faith had a clandestine purpose. Bigotry is a consequence of religious upbringing, he observed; but such established iniquities could be gradually transformed through eloquence and style. If a preacher were capable of advocating experimental or experiential spirituality in polite and graceful vein, his listeners would not concentrate on exposing possible heresies but instead attempt to discover as much orthodoxy in the sermon as they could. In this manner an experienced preacher could competently guide the congregation as a whole in spite of the religious bigotry of the majority. In time, Doddridge thought, a dexterous preacher could slowly educate even the less liberal part of his flock.<sup>237</sup> Hollebeek, for one, showed a strong appreciation for Doddridge's preaching, and surely the 'warm piety' exuded by the Englishman's sermons was not the only reason for his interest.

Hollebeek is usually mentioned in connection with his *De optimo concionum genere, qua ea divinas literas e suggestu sacro exponendi methodus, quae vulgo Anglicana dicitur, modeste defenditur* (1768–1769). His call for homiletic reform struck at the roots, not necessarily of orthodox Calvinism, but certainly of the confessional public sphere. Before about 1770, sermons tended to follow the so-called 'Holland method'.<sup>238</sup> This entailed an enormously detailed exegesis of scriptural passages, mainly serving to underline established truths. Printed sermons in particular functioned as an extension of the confessional public sphere. On the basis of impressive philological know-how, they demonstrated that the accepted public truths were a reflection of scriptural truths,

<sup>236</sup> As the Dutch well knew; cf. the commentary in *VL 1771-i*, 97–105, on Doddridge's *A course of lectures* (1763); D.tr. *Verzameling van akademische lessen* (1771).

<sup>237</sup> On Doddridge's 'calculated preaching', see Webb, 'The Emergence of Rational Dissent', 33–36; Webb, 'From toleration to religious liberty', 184–185, on Doddridge's 'clandestine purpose in preaching an evangelical, experimental faith'.

<sup>238</sup> The following is based on Bosma, *Woorden van een gezond verstand*, 265–318.

and that the preacher in question was learned, orthodox, and trustworthy. The dissenters, such as Status Muller in *The Clergy's Moralists*, had already been calling for reforms in pulpit oratory for many years. The great source of inspiration was Tillotson, whose 'plain style' moulded English preaching throughout the eighteenth century, but who also surfaced in Germany in the sermons of Mosheim.<sup>239</sup> In the last two or three decades, a torrent of German plain style sermons appeared in Dutch.<sup>240</sup> As far as adherents to traditional preaching were concerned, the English style was doubtful because it could easily be misused. Lack of exegesis could lead to too much doctrinal freedom and too great an emphasis on morality, something only 'Nominal Remonstrants and coarse Tolerants' appreciated.<sup>241</sup> Unfortunately, the most important among Hollebeek's supporters, Paulus Chevallier, succeeded in affirming all the prejudices of his more traditional colleagues by publishing 'plain style' sermons that focused exclusively on moral issues.<sup>242</sup> Despite the resistance, however, the simple style of preaching gradually gained popularity during the 1770s and 1780s. It was given added impetus by translations of Johann Joachim Spalding's *Über die Nutsbarkeit des Predigtamts* (1773), duly denounced by the orthodox clergy as a covert defence of natural morality and an implicit denial of the Trinity, justification by faith and original sin;<sup>243</sup> and the *Lectures on rhetorics and belles-lettres* (1783) by the Scottish 'Moderate' Hugh Blair.<sup>244</sup> As Jelle Bosma has shown, Dutch divines

<sup>239</sup> J.L. Mosheim *Anweisung, erbaulich zu predigen* (1763); D.tr. *De predikkunde* (1770). Cf. *De Recensent* I (1787), 431–439, with a review of *Bijdragen tot bevordering van waarheid en godvrucht* [Contributions to the advancement of truth and piety], Amsterdam 1786–1788. Apparently the *Bijdragen* were published by a society of 'very moderate' Reformed divines who concentrated above all on the reform of sermons. These divines used German sermons as their models; the periodical contained contributions by J. Pfeningner, A.F. Jacobi, J. Tobler, and J.F. Jacobi.

<sup>240</sup> E.g. C.G. Salzmann, *Gottesverehrungen* (1784, vol. 5), held at the Philanthropin at Dessau; D.tr. *Korte voorstellen ter verheerlykinge van Jesus* (1793). The reviewer in *VL* 1794-i, 533–534, observed that the term 'proposal' (*voorstel*) was used in the title because nowadays many people were repulsed by the word 'sermon'; Salzmann, he added, preached exclusively on fundamental truths. Zollikofer was another popular German preacher (see also above), with sermons emphasizing popular enlightenment and toleration; cf. *VL* 1793-i, 478–482. For German 'plain style' sermonizers, see Bosch, *Woorden van een gezond verstand*, 28 note.

<sup>241</sup> Quoted in Bosma, *Woorden van een gezond verstand*, 302.

<sup>242</sup> Bosma, *Woorden van een gezond verstand*, 303. He was criticized for this by Petrus Hofstede.

<sup>243</sup> D.tr. J.J. Spalding, *De nuttigheid van het predik-ampt* (1776); review in *NB* 1776-i, 569–576.

<sup>244</sup> D.tr. H. Blair, *Lessen, over de redekunst en fraaie weetenschappen* (1788–1790), tr. by

began to preach less ‘analytically’ and more according to the new standards, which implied less abstruse exegesis, the use of clear language, a plain and simple message, and a thematic structure. For the less thoroughgoing divines a combination of the old and new methods was developed, the so-called synthetic-analytical method.

Orthodox suspicions regarding the new method of preaching were not unfounded. Calculated preaching, whether by Doddridge or Hollebeek, undermined the confessional public sphere. Evangelical piety and the plain style were perfect companions, since both emphasized doctrinal simplicity, sometimes to the point of making doctrinal issues as such redundant.<sup>245</sup> This is illustrated by the controversy surrounding Gerardus Theodorus de Cock (1733–1808), a rather unremarkable Frisian minister who had studied at Groningen, where he must have listened to Hollebeek’s account of plain style sermons. In 1765, using the new method, De Cock held a sermon on John 15:17 (‘These things I command you, that ye love one another’). He defined Christian charity as ‘that divine beautiful Virtue, consisting of a persistent, that is to say a permanently upheld intention of our will (. . .) to wish the best in body and soul for everyone around us, and to do our best to foster it.’ Christian charity applied to the whole of humankind, preached De Cock, including those who entertained other, even erroneous, religious beliefs.<sup>246</sup> The sermon was duly examined by the local classis, which concluded that De Cock had unjustifiably emphasized charity at the cost of man’s sinfulness, and confused Christian charity with universal love. A colleague, Laurentius Meijer, observed that De Cock’s charity was indistinguishable from the natural politeness advocated by proponents of natural law like Seneca, Cicero and Pufendorf. He also noted that De Cock had transcribed a substantial portion of his sermon from Doddridge.<sup>247</sup>

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Herman Bosscha (1755–1819), a neo-Latinist and Patriot who after 1795 embarked on an academic career in rhetoric and history.

<sup>245</sup> Cf. the translations of the ‘sentimental’ sermons by Johann Caspar Lavater. Lavater, *Twee leerredenen* (1777), contained a sermon on Christian charity; Lavater, *Kerkelijke redevoeringen* (1777), tr. by G.M. Nebe, included sermons on the fraternal community of the early church, Christian friendship, and sincerity; a reviewer in *NB* 1778-i, 623–632, criticized Lavater’s evasion of non-scriptural doctrinal terms (such as ‘Trinity’). On Lavater’s sermons, see Bosma, *Woorden van een gezond verstand*, 317–318.

<sup>246</sup> Quoted in Van Sluis, ‘Verlicht en verdraagzaam?’, 154–155; Bosma, *Woorden van een gezond verstand*, 316.

<sup>247</sup> Van Sluis, ‘Verlicht en verdraagzaam?’, 156–157; L. Meijer, *Zeedige aanmerkingen*

Judging by the number of translations and the number of times they were reissued,<sup>248</sup> Doddridge must have enjoyed certain popularity in the Netherlands. Wilhelmus Suderman († 1750), a Remonstrant minister from Rotterdam, had translated several works. Suderman's name, wrote the Collegiant publisher Tirion to Doddridge in 1751, was kept hidden at his own request, partly because 'it would have offended some tender brethren of the zealous calvinistical scheme, that an Arminian was the translator of your works.'<sup>249</sup> During the Van der Os affair, in 1753, Jan Jacob Schultens published translations of a number of sermons by Doddridge, in which the latter appealed to 'mutual Union and Love'. Schultens added prefaces of his own, addressed to the members of the so-called 'Calvinian Society'.<sup>250</sup> Schultens apparently tried to kill two birds with one stone. Via Doddridge, he could defend the cause of toleration as well as mobilize the moderately orthodox within the Reformed Church.<sup>251</sup> The appropriation of Doddridge by dissenters like Tirion<sup>252</sup> and Suderman and latitudinarian divines like Schultens eventually led to the disqualification of the Englishman as a propagandist of tolerant views. Especially in the debate between Van der Kemp and Goodricke, Watts and Doddridge were accused of Arianism and Arminianism (and not wholly without reason).<sup>253</sup>

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*over de Kristelyke liefde* [*Modest comments on Christian charity*] (1766). De Cock was supported against Meijer by the Vitriningian minister Petrus Wigeri (1710–1800), who had studied theology at Franeker under Venema. Wigeri was one of the few Reformed divines to compliment Betje Wolff on her translation of Craig; *Briefwisseling van Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken*, 151.

<sup>248</sup> See for the following Van den Berg and Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge*, 98–100. Van den Berg argues that Doddridge's popularity resulted from his combination of 'evangelical piety with a moderate and tolerant attitude' (95).

<sup>249</sup> Quoted in Van den Berg and Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge*, 27.

<sup>250</sup> These sermons (Leiden 1753) were *Christian candour and unanimity, The evil and danger of neglecting the souls of men*, and *The absurdity and iniquity of persecution for conscience-sake*; Van den Berg and Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge*, 31. The sermons were later included without the prefaces in P. Doddridge, *Tien predikatiën over verscheide voortreffelyke uitgekijpte en over aangenaeme onderwerpen*, Leiden 1758, tr. by J.F. Martinet.

<sup>251</sup> The heroine in Wolff and Deken's *Sara Burgerhart* reads the sermons of Doddridge and Zollikofer. (Letter 37). Elsewhere Doddridge, Watts, Werenfels and Zollikofer are praised; Van der Vliet, *Wolff en Deken's brieven van Abraham Blankaart*, 226.

<sup>252</sup> Doddridge would have raised suspicions because of his funeral sermon on Samuel Clarke. Isaac Tirion wrote to Doddridge in 1751, thanking him for the sermon on 'a Man, though before unknown to me, who deserved the esteem of all pious and Moderate Christians'. Van den Berg and Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge*, 23.

<sup>253</sup> Van den Berg and Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge*, 62–64. According to Goodricke the initial accuser was Comrie, who made use of critical extracts of Doddridge's works by Cornelis Brem, who in turn had written them for his own private use.

Reformed divines with distinctly conservative theological leanings, however, also warmly recommended Doddridge. The most important was the Reformed divine Wilhelm Peiffers (1705–1779), who wrote a preface to the Dutch edition (1746) of the *Practical discourses on regeneration* (1742).<sup>254</sup> The indisputably orthodox Peiffers commented on Doddridge, ‘here orthodoxy reigns joined with Moderation, Zeal with Meekness’; here could be found reason without Pelagianism, and piety without enthusiasm.<sup>255</sup> Wilhelm Peiffers is usually regarded as one of the first proponents of evangelical piety in its orthodox Calvinist form. He authored *The certainty of faith of a true but unlettered Christian against the present most dangerous temptations* (1766),<sup>256</sup> the temptations being freethinking on the one hand and enthusiasm on the other. As a minister at Amsterdam, Peiffers would have been amply acquainted with both temptations, and his book was intended as a practical guide for believers. He was a pupil of Lampe, a ‘serious Cocceian’ with a broad orientation; an open-minded man who accepted the limitations of confessions but fully subscribed to the Calvinist formularies; and an outspoken adversary of the speculative elements in the scholastic theology propounded by divines like Comrie. Peiffers may be further characterized as an orthodox evangelical by his irenicism (he sympathized with Greek Orthodoxy, Lutheranism, and Baptism), and his reduction of much ecclesiastical discord to immoderate quibbling.<sup>257</sup> Influenced by the ‘reasonable piety’ of evangelicals like Doddridge, Baxter, Watts, and Hervey, Peiffers was an orthodox denizen of the polite public. He had much to say on natural religion as a foundation for revealed religion, and discarded atheism as manifestly unreasonable. While rejecting the pietist notion that certainty of faith must be the result of immediate revelation, he strongly emphasized personal faith experience. He argued that certainty

<sup>254</sup> D.tr. P. Doddridge, *Praktikale leerredenen over de wedergeboorte* (1746, 5th ed. 1777). Peiffers also wrote prefaces to other translations of Doddridge’s writings.

<sup>255</sup> Quoted in Van den Berg and Nuttall, *Philip Doddridge*, 25.

<sup>256</sup> W. Peiffers, *Geloofs-vastigheid van een waar, schoon ongeletterd Christen, tegen de heden-daagsch zeer gevaarlyke verleidingen* (1766).

<sup>257</sup> Graafland, ‘Verlichting en zekerheid’, 87–88. Thus in Witsius, *Vredelievende aanmerkingen*, 1754, IX, Peiffers quotes ‘that Phoenix of Dutch Church Orators and Poets’, Johannes Vollenhove: ‘O brothers, cease this noisy dispute (. . .) That is fitting for God’s messengers of peace.’ Peiffers quotes from Vollenhove’s ‘Klagte over den kerktwist’ [‘Complaint about ecclesiastical discord’] (1678): see A.L. Lesturgeon ed., *Bloemlezing uit de gedichten van Johannes Vollenhove*, Schiedam 1866, 96–97.

is available to all, that it is highly useful and advantageous, and that it can be had by rational soul-analysis. He was a kindred spirit of the sympathetic Styntje Doorzicht in Wolff and Deken's novel *Sara Burgerhart*. Styntje works out her own 'Evangelical Doctrine' in which conversion is signalled by remorse and self-denial rather than stylized and superficial self-humiliation. Her favourite authors are Doddridge, the puritan Christopher Love, Tersteegen, Thomas à Kempis, and Deknatel; and the non-confessional nature of her piety leads her to the poetry of both the Calvinist Lodensteyn and the Collegiant Camphuysen. Repulsed by the sanctimonious self-adulation rampant in the conventicles, Styntje decides that she will follow no rule of faith other than God's infallible Word. She subsequently develops her own *praxis pietatis*, emphasizing Christian charity and forgiveness, and carefully balancing grace and law.<sup>258</sup> Evidently, Wolff and Deken intended her to exemplify the broad-minded, reasonable, and orthodox evangelicalism of clergymen like Wilhelm Peiffers.

Orthodox evangelicals, then, stressed inward religious experience, which they sheltered from enthusiasm by a 'reasonable' approach to faith.<sup>259</sup> This conception of piety was instrumental to their participation in the polite public. Not surprisingly, confessional theologians who valued reasonable evangelical piety also sympathized with homiletic reform. The most significant among these was Gisbert Bonnet, who helped develop the modified, so-called 'synthetic-analytical method'. One of Bonnet's followers, Petrus Henricus van Lis (1754–1809), not only wrote *The honour and authority of the formularies of concord defended* (1785), but also put through homiletic reforms and became a Reformed sermonizer of repute.<sup>260</sup>

The Dutch reception of the founding father of Methodism, John Wesley (1703–1791), affords another illustration of the way in which evangelical piety reflected the polite public. Wesley visited the Netherlands three times and we are assured that during each visit he met with Dutchmen whose piety he valued and who in turn were

<sup>258</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Sara Burgerhart*, Letters 128, 134, 95.

<sup>259</sup> To this characterization may be added the 'four qualities' mentioned in Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain*, 1–19: 'conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the Gospel in effort; biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross' (3).

<sup>260</sup> Bosma, *Woorden van een gezond verstand*, 313; P.H. van Lis, *De eer en het gezag der formulieren van eenigheid (...)* *verdedigt* (1785); reissued in 1806. On Bonnet, see this section below.

receptive to Wesley's ideas on the nature of faith.<sup>261</sup> This is true enough, but it is important to realize that the kind of people who welcomed Wesley in the 1730s differed substantially from those who received him in the 1780s. It is also important to note that Wesley's opinion of Calvinism was not flattering. Predestinarianism obstructed the dissemination of the Gospel, he believed. Having read Episcopius' account of the Synod of Dort, he exclaimed, 'What a pity it is that the *holy Synod* of Trent and that of Dort did not sit at the same time; nearly allied as they were (. . .).'<sup>262</sup> As an avowed anti-predestinarian, Wesley began a periodical called *The Arminian Magazine* in 1777. Although the Calvinism which Wesley rejected was primarily the hyper-Calvinism of the kind propagated in the Netherlands by Comrie and Holtius, and although the Arminianism he favoured was one based primarily on piety, the question nonetheless arises which Dutchmen were prepared to receive in their midst an anti-Calvinistic enthusiast. The only constant factor in the Dutch reception of Wesley were the Dutch Arminians, who showed no interest whatsoever in the English 'fanatic'. They made certain that William Warburton's anti-Methodist *Doctrine of grace* (1763) was available to the Dutch,<sup>263</sup> and the translator, Cornelis Nozeman, pointedly included a preface associating Wesley's Arminian revivalism with orthodox Calvinist pietism. He also observed that Calvinist enthusiasm had turned Christianity into an object of derision, fostering unbelief and free-thinking; and that there was little difference between the boorish enthusiasm of some Reformed ministers and the new English fanaticism. Conversely, those who had been disqualified as enthusiasts in the first half of the eighteenth century were also the ones to welcome Wesley during his first visit to Holland in 1739, on his way to and from Germany. Wesley, who valued the Moravian zeal in spreading the light of the Gospel, had already met with a certain Francis Wynantz, a trader from Dantzic who seems to have been Dutch and who had contacts with the Herrnhuters. Wynantz was interested in the French prophets and even married the daughter of Charles de Portalès, one of the leaders of the sect. In Holland itself, Wesley

<sup>261</sup> The following is based on Van den Berg, 'John Wesley's contacten met Nederland'; further literature is provided here.

<sup>262</sup> Quoted in Van den Berg, 'John Wesley's contacten met Nederland', 42.

<sup>263</sup> D.tr. W. Warburton, *De leere van genade* (1767), following the third English edition; Warburton had sent Nozeman some additions to the text.



befriended Johannes de Koker (1696–1752), a Mennonite-Collegiant physician, who criticized Wesley for drawing the line at Arianism and Socinianism. Wesley also travelled to the newly founded Herrnhuter colony at IJsselstein and from thence to Amsterdam, where he met, among others, the Mennonite Joannes Deknatel and the Reformed pietist Isaac le Long. For all their piety, these men did not represent the establishment.

The later Dutch reception of Wesley was quite different, as his itinerary through the Republic illustrates. Wesley travelled to the Republic in June 1783, during the fourth Anglo-Dutch War, at the instigation of William Ferguson (1735–1796). Ferguson was an entrepreneur of Scottish origin, a Methodist who sold Wesley's books in the Netherlands and planned to have one or several of his sermons translated into Dutch. Via some of his customers, Ferguson had become acquainted with an informal group of pious Christians. To this group belonged 'some of the rich and great' (who, however, 'appeared to be as humble as the least of them').<sup>264</sup> Wesley was given a warm welcome by these 'rich and great', whose sympathies were, it appears, primarily Orangist and pro-English (rather than pro-American). They welcomed him with that candour and condescension 'which is almost peculiar to Christians and persons of quality'. One typical member of this enthusiastic Dutch aristocracy was Anna Arnoldina van Boetzelaer, the Dowager Baroness of Wassenaer-Starrenburg, who was probably the 'Madam van Wassenaer' at whose house Wesley preached on 1 Cor. 13:4–7 (the Philadelphian passage on charity).<sup>265</sup> In Amsterdam Wesley conversed with a number of wealthy tradesmen, as well as Gerard de Haas (1737–1817), a popular Orangist preacher 'truly alive to God'. In Utrecht he met Johanna Loten, the daughter of an Orangist burgomaster who herself married a burgomaster-to-be. At the Lotens, Wesley met with the Orangist law professor Meinard Tydeman, widely regarded as a supporter of orthodoxy and an ubiquitous high society man. Tydeman organized weekly gatherings, alternating between professor Bonnet and the Orangist minister Jacob Hinlòpen (1723–1803), where religious matters were discussed. Wesley also met with dissenters, of course, including Mennonites at Haarlem and Herrnhuters at Zeist. He even had

<sup>264</sup> Van den Berg, 'John Wesley's contacten met Nederland', 64.

<sup>265</sup> Van den Berg, 'John Wesley's contacten met Nederland', 77; later, in the English church in Utrecht, Wesley again preached on 1 Cor. 13.

lunch with the ex-minister Willem Antony van Vloten (1740–1809), a pupil of Bonnet who would later reject ‘the modernized Augustinian system of the Reformed’ as a greater threat to virtue and holiness than Roman Catholicism.<sup>266</sup>

Wesley’s third journey to Holland in August 1786 had similar results. At Leiden, he visited Carolus Boers (1746–1814), an Orangist theology professor and friend of Tydeman. At Haarlem, he had dinner at the residence of Cornelia Paulina van Valkenburg (1756–1822), a burgomaster’s daughter.<sup>267</sup> He visited the Lotens at Utrecht again, where he preached to ‘a select company of very honourable ladies.’<sup>268</sup> The differences between Wesley’s reception in the 1730s and 1780s are considerable. By the end of the century, evangelical piety had become a vehicle of polite communication among ‘pietists’ of very different inclination, and doctrine to all appearances a matter of private conviction. It is true that Wesley’s influence was mainly restricted to private contacts. His writings were not translated extensively and many of those who would otherwise have valued his piety distrusted his Arminianism; such people preferred Calvinists like George Whitefield or James Hervey.<sup>269</sup> Nevertheless, the interest in Wesley is significant in that it shows the ‘ecumenical’ consequences of piety as a means of polite communication. The Calvinist clergy had reassessed enthusiasm; some even portrayed Emanuel Swedenborg as a ‘mystic of the better sort’, a man of ‘sincere piety.’<sup>270</sup>

As we have argued, polite communication entailed the acknowledgment that reason and piety offered a more appropriate basis for the public sphere than confessional authority. Open-minded piety with a tinge of reasonableness characterized the elite and orthodox

<sup>266</sup> Van den Berg, ‘John Wesley’s contacten met Nederland’, 84.

<sup>267</sup> Cornelia van Valkenburg was the daughter of Mattheus Willem van Valkenburg (1718–1784), who was known as a pious man; her mother, Christina le Leu de Wilhem, also stemmed from a family of *fijnen*. She was the sister-in-law of the Orangist Hieronymus van Alphen (see below); Buijnsters, *Hiernomys van Alphen*, 153.

<sup>268</sup> Van den Berg, ‘John Wesley’s contacten met Nederland’, 90.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. Hervey’s defence of his *Theron and Aspasio* against Wesley: *Elystal van brieven*, Rotterdam 1776, tr. by Marinus van Werkhoven, an orthodox publicist; review in *NB* 1776-i, 644–646. The reviewer contrasted Wesley unfavourably with Whitefield on account of his views on predestination. The orthodox *Nieuw Evangelisch Magazijn* criticized the Methodists for extending the limits of toleration too far; Van den Berg, ‘John Wesley’s contacten met Nederland’, 94.

<sup>270</sup> [Anon.], *Briefswijze verhandeling betreffende het leven van Em. Swedenborg*, Amsterdam 1790, tr. by IJ. van Hamelsveld from the German; cf. the review in *VB* 1791-i, 215–219.

religious circle at Utrecht, which Wesley had visited in the 1780s. It included men like the professors Tydeman and Bonnet and the reverend Hinlōpen, and a number of otherwise distinguished people. Meinard Tydeman (1741–1825) had undergone a conversion experience of which he wrote an autobiographical account. A law professor at Utrecht, Tydeman was learned, broad-minded, conservative, Orangist, and orthodox.<sup>271</sup> He once reprimanded Betje Wolff in an exceedingly patronizing letter for her ridicule of the Calvinist tenet that man has the natural inclination to hate God, and for her criticism of preachers who regarded themselves as emissaries of God.<sup>272</sup> When the Genevan Huguenot Firmin Abauzit (1679–1767) caused a posthumous controversy on the canonicity of the Apocalypse, the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* requested Meinard Tydeman to comment on it.<sup>273</sup> Tydeman also maintained close contacts with professor Bonnet. The latter was ‘a lively and cheerful man,’ according to Boswell, and a friend of the Scottish evangelical John Erskine.<sup>274</sup> Bonnet is characteristic of the polite Calvinist evangelicals in that he refuted Paulus van Hemert’s unequivocally rationalist views in the course of an extensive debate. At the same time, however, he did not dispense with reason as such, and his views on the role of reason in the interpretation of Scripture no longer accorded with those of the orthodox Calvinist scholastics.<sup>275</sup>

In the religious and intellectual circle led by Tydeman and Bonnet, conversion experiences abounded.<sup>276</sup> One of the outstanding mem-

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<sup>271</sup> Cf. *Opuscula societatis cui symbolum, Tandem sit surculus arbor* (1776); Tydeman included an essay in favour of old-fashioned sentiments, rejecting Rousseau’s political views. His edition of *Syntagma dissertationum ad philosophiam moralem pertinentium* (1777) included treatises by German Lutheran writers such as Reimarus, J.D. Heilmann, Christoph Friedrich Schott (1720–1775, professor of rhetoric at Tübingen), Adam Wilhelm Franzen (1718–1766, professor of rhetoric at Halle), J.G.H. Feder, and a treatise by A.J. Drijfhout on natural law; the latter contended that natural law was based, not on happiness (Burlamaqui), but on the glory of God.

<sup>272</sup> *Briefwisseling van Betje Wolff en Aagje Deken*, 264–266 (letter dated 1775).

<sup>273</sup> *NB* 1778-i, 550–553; cf. Abauzit’s *Discours historique sur l’Apocalypse* (1770); D.tr. *Historisch vertoog over het boek der Openbaaringe* (1778). After careful examination, Tydeman concluded that Abauzit was a Socinian who had later retracted his views on the Apocalypse; an anonymous Frisian adversary started a debate on whether Abauzit had, in fact, retracted his views.

<sup>274</sup> Boswell, *Boswell in Holland*.

<sup>275</sup> On this, see Van den End, *Gisbertus Bonnet*, 65–85.

<sup>276</sup> Van Goens and Bilderdijk should also be considered. Both maintained relations with Tydeman’s circle (Van Goens was Van Alphen’s brother-in-law, and Bilderdijk would later correspond intensively with Tydeman himself); both were

bers of the circle was the poet and lawyer Hieronymus van Alphen (1746–1803, not to be confused with his namesake, who had befriended Zinzendorf). Van Alphen had studied law at Utrecht under Tydeman and later at Leiden under the Orangist Pestel, where he examined the writings of Barbeyrac on toleration.<sup>277</sup> Van Alphen too had a conversion experience, on the 8th of August 1767, to be precise. While he acknowledged that Jesus had saved him, he lived a worrisome life, brooding about his own proclivity towards sin.<sup>278</sup> His friends also experienced conversions—the illness and subsequent conversion of one of them strongly influenced the group as a whole—but they did not fret as much as he.<sup>279</sup> Wary of committing himself to anyone who might draw him away from the Lord, Van Alphen attended Tydeman's weekly household meetings. He, too, exemplified a broad evangelicalism, combining Calvinist piety with Wolffian philosophical leanings. He was relatively orthodox in his religious views, but more concerned with conversion and sanctification than examining signs of election. At the same time he read widely in writers ranging from Lavater to Sulzer, and recommended as reading material Grotius, Werenfels, Turretini, Michaelis, Jerusalem, Stapfer and Mosheim, next to Bonnet, Hinlòpen and the Reformed confessions.<sup>280</sup> Not surprisingly for an evangelical, one of Van Alphen's poems was called 'The unity of all believers'.<sup>281</sup> He was a staunch churchman, but his views on the church were wholly in tune with the demands of the polite religious public. For example, in his translation of Thomas Abbt's *Vom Verdienste* (1765), he argued that the church should not

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politically conservative, and both converted to an orthodoxy of sorts in the 1780s. Van Goens later befriended Lavater; Bilderdijk would be influenced by that other *Spätpietist* Jung Stilling. See also section 5.7.

<sup>277</sup> Wille, *Van Goens*, I, 67; on Pestel, see section 5.5 above.

<sup>278</sup> For the following, see Buijnsters, *Hieronymus van Alphen*, 28–37; Bosch, *En nooit meer oude Psalmen zingen*, 161–171.

<sup>279</sup> Members of the group who had experienced conversions included Pieter Leonard van de Kastele (1748–1810, a later Patriot), Johannes Kneppelhout (a pupil of Tydeman and one of the founders of the *Haagsch Genootschap*), Carolus Boers (whom Wesley visited) and Ane Drijfhout (1742–1827). Drijfhout wrote a preface for the Dutch translation of Mosheim's *Sittenlehre*, in which he advocated a middle way between divine grace and moral duty. Another member with conversion experience was John Henry Livingston, an American pupil of Bonnet; see Beets, 'John H. Livingston'.

<sup>280</sup> Buijnsters, *Hieronymus van Alphen*, 221.

<sup>281</sup> H. van Alphen and P.L. van de Kastele, *Proeve van stichtelijke mengel-poëzij* (1772–1773).

be a 'separate society of people, but a society of Christian-citizens.'<sup>282</sup> Van Alphen would develop into one of the most interesting, if impotent, conservative critics of the Dutch 'revolution', condemning the separation of church and state, the idea of a written constitution, and recent theories of revolt. The antidote he prescribed was a 'true popular enlightenment', to be disseminated by the writings of wise men, the Bible ('the best religious and political manual'), a 'national literature', and a good educational system, which would teach mankind the twin virtues of emancipated sociability and political submission. He pleaded for both state religion and full religious liberty.<sup>283</sup>

Unlike their pietist predecessors, Calvinist evangelicals avoided a profusion of doctrine in their sermons and restricted themselves to an unadorned 'preaching of the cross' that focused on the simple scheme of iniquity, conversion, and gratitude. They held in high regard the sermons of writers like Johann Caspar Lavater, Johann Ludwig Ewald, and John Newton.<sup>284</sup> Insofar as they had Calvinist sympathies, these cultivated evangelicals did not unduly emphasize the theology of Dort (as Wesley noted to his satisfaction),<sup>285</sup> but they did not forsake it either.<sup>286</sup> They were not against 'enlightenment', but believed that as far as religion was concerned the Gospel message alone was sufficiently enlightened and enlightening.<sup>287</sup> This was the view of an anonymous divine who stressed the need for edu-

<sup>282</sup> Quoted in Buijnsters, *Hieronymus van Alphen*, 96; D.tr. T. Abbt, *Over de verdienste*, Utrecht 1777.

<sup>283</sup> H. van Alphen, *De waare volksverlichting met opzigt tot godsdienst en staatkunde* [*The true popular enlightenment in respect of religion and politics*] (1793), V–VIII, 34–36, 70–72.

<sup>284</sup> Bosma, *Woorden van een gezond verstand*, 374–378. Ewald was highly regarded for his 'reasonable piety', but not considered particularly orthodox; cf. *VL* 1795-i, 192–193. His 'instructional, edifying and encouraging' meditations on the Gospels were acclaimed in *VL* 1794-i, 293–297; J.L. Ewald, *Leiden, Tod und Auferstehung unseres Herrn von ihrer menschlichsten Seite betrachtet* (1785); D.tr. *Overdenkingen van het lyden, den dood en opstanding, van Jesus* [1794]. On Ewald, see Kirn, *Deutsche Spätaufklärung und Pietismus*.

<sup>285</sup> Van den Berg, 'John Wesley's contacten met Nederland', 93: 'very few now receive them [the *Canones of Dort*] even in Holland'.

<sup>286</sup> In some ways characteristic is the *Aaneengeschakelde verklaring van den Heidelbergschen Katechismus* [*Concatenated exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism*] (1791), by Bartholomeus Ouboter († 1793). Ouboter related in his preface that he had been a heresy-hunter in his youth, but that he was now interested only in convincing people inwardly of the truth. Concerned to achieve concord in a spiritually divided (Reformed) church, he suggested that Christians should above all search the Scriptures (albeit according to the formularies) and practise the truths they find.

<sup>287</sup> Cf. J.L. Ewald, *Ueber den Mißbrauch reiner Bibellehren* (1791); D.tr. *Over het misbruik eeniger hoofdwaarheden van den christelijken godsdienst*, Utrecht 1794, I–II.

cating the 'Common man' in religion. The latter needed only to be shown 'God in Christ', for wherever the Bible is expounded in simple terms, people will be affected by it.<sup>288</sup> To ensure and hasten the imminent 'triumph of Orthodoxy', however, he believed it necessary to spread devotional and instructional texts on Christian experience. The author mentioned, apart from the recent *Evangelical Magazine*, a number of foreign writers of pietist and revivalist provenance: John Owen, the Erskines, James Hervey, the puritan Walter Marshall (1628–1680),<sup>289</sup> Abraham Booth, John Newton, Hermann Daniel Hermes, Jonathan Edwards, Philip Jacob Spener and Thomas Adam (1701–1784). He explicitly advocated books written according to modern standards of taste.<sup>290</sup> A typical writer who was well-received in these evangelical Dutch circles was Christian Ziegeurer, a pastor in the Swiss Canton Graubünden. His booklet on the corruptions of contemporary Christianity was issued three times in 1775–1776 by three separate publishers under three different titles.<sup>291</sup> Ziegeurer argued that the moral preaching of his Socinian, Arminian, Pelagian, philosophical and legalist contemporaries had only increased popular vice. As an orthodox evangelical, he strongly emphasized the *sola scriptura* principle, claimed to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified, and pleaded with missionary fervour for a preaching of the Gospel rather than the Law.

## 7.6 EDUCATING THE COMMON MAN

If not all polite evangelicals appreciated the Arminian Wesley, they did unanimously rehabilitate the Moravians. Positive appraisals were still rare in the 1770s, although by then the idiosyncratic adoration of Christ's bloody wounds was no longer much in vogue among

<sup>288</sup> *PGVCG* (1791), 39–42.

<sup>289</sup> The Dutch translation of Marshall's immensely popular *The Gospel-mystery of sanctification* (1692), contained the 1761 preface by James Hervey as well as one by Petrus Nieuwland; D.tr. *Verhandeling over de ware euangelische heiligmaking* (1772).

<sup>290</sup> *PGVCG* (1791), 55–65.

<sup>291</sup> Ziegeurer's books were published by P. van Nieuwenrode (Utrecht 1775), A. Stubbe (Utrecht 1776), and C.H. Bohn (Haarlem 1775). In 1779 a second tract by Ziegeurer was translated, and published together with the first. I have used a later edition based on the 1775 and 1779 translations, and published by H.P. Scholte: C. Ziegeurer, *Theologische bedenkingen, over het tegenwoordige bederf der christenheid in leer en leven* (1838).

Herrnhuters. However, the new emphasis on piety as a basis for public communication resulted in the rapidly growing acceptability of Herrnhuters.<sup>292</sup> For who had more practical experience in bringing the Gospel to the people than the Moravians? Even the *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* now pronounced mild judgement on August Gottlieb Spangenberg's *Idea fidei fratrum*, one of the books that did much to redress the Herrnhuter reputation.<sup>293</sup> Another such publication, Spangenberg's account of missionary work, was also received favourably in the press.<sup>294</sup> An influential Reformed supporter of the Moravians was Herman Johannes Krom (1738–1804), a professor of church history at Middelburg who held relatively conservative religious views but had a marked evangelical frame of mind.<sup>295</sup> Krom wrote a favourable preface to the Dutch translation of the *Ratio disciplinae unitatis fratrum* (1789) by Johann Loretz (1727–1798), in which he evinced strong sympathies for the missionary pursuits of the Herrnhuters, and defended their ideal of an ecumenical 'heart religion'.<sup>296</sup> Comparable to Krom in this respect was the Reformed minister Jean Louis Verster (1745–1814), one of Bonnet's pupils, who contacted the Herrnhuters in the 1780s.<sup>297</sup> Verster began to preach according to the 'new light', teaching that Jesus had died for all. He was an evangelical who sympathized less with orthodox Calvinism than Bonnet, and was consequently held in suspicion by his colleagues; he was especially popular as a sermonizer among the powerful and the well-to-do, and married into a family of magistrates.

Evangelicals, then, did not object to what the high Cocceians had

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<sup>292</sup> The *VL* 1779-i, 565–566, was conspicuously mild in reviewing the *Wahrhafter Bericht (. . .) Jonas Eilers* (1778), an enormously popular conversion history by Rudolph Heinrich Taute, a pietist preacher in Ostfriesland; D.tr. *Echt en geloofwaardig bericht van het byzonder en opmerklyk genadewerk Gods* (1779); translated with the epigraph 'Pietas vigeat'.

<sup>293</sup> A.G. Spangenberg, D.tr. *Idea fidei fratrum, of kort begrip der Christelyke leer, in de Euangelische broedergemeenten* (1782), tr. by the Reformed minister Abraham Offers (1747–1813), a friend of Verster (see below); *NB* 1783-i, 30–37.

<sup>294</sup> A.G. Spangenberg, *Von der Arbeit der evangelischen Brüder unter den Heiden* (1782); D.tr. *Arbeid der Euangelische Broederen onder de heidenen* (1790); cf. the review in *VB* 1790-i, 389–394, with much praise for the humanitarianism shown by the Moravians in spreading the Gospel.

<sup>295</sup> In his address *De vera et imaginaria ecclesiae christianae prosperitate praecipue* (1775), Krom had argued that prosperity was not the result of freedom of speech or ecclesiastical toleration, but of mutual charity among Christians.

<sup>296</sup> D.tr. [J. Loretz], *Ratio disciplinae unitatis fratrum A.C. of grondschets van de inrigtingen der Euangelische broeder-gemeenten* (1793), XXII–XXXVIII.

<sup>297</sup> Van Rhijn, 'Ds. J.L. Verster'.

once denounced as enthusiasm. However, their ‘enthusiasm’ was broader, and often more ‘reasonable’, than the Dutch pietist-puritan brand exemplified by writers like Holtius, Comrie and Van der Groe. They participated fully in the polite public. In the previous section we have already discussed the role of evangelicals in polite society. In this section we shall focus on their views concerning polite education, in particular the education of the ‘common man’. These views, which they shared with most of their contemporaries, were intimately related to the late eighteenth-century pursuit of missions.

Evangelicals produced periodicals such as the *Evangelical Magazine*, which aimed at advancing the knowledge and practice of religious truths.<sup>298</sup> The periodical informed its readers on such topics as the history of the orphanage founded by the Lutheran pietist August Hermann Francke in 1695, and a newly established German society ‘for the improvement of practical Christianity’—the *Deutsche Christentum Gesellschaft*.<sup>299</sup> It included essays that discussed theological discord, charity and forbearance from an explicitly orthodox point of view. The initiator and editor of the *Evangelical Magazine* was the layman Cornelis Brem (1721–1803), a well-to-do member of the Scottish church at Rotterdam.<sup>300</sup> Befriended with the Dutch-Scottish Calvinists Comrie and Kennedy, Brem was an untiring and unequivocal guardian of orthodox Calvinism. In 1790, for example, he disputed a *Diary of my good works*, a sentimental work with evangelical leanings in which the author defended both the *sola gratia* principle and universal salvation.<sup>301</sup> Earlier Brem had used the pseudonym

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<sup>298</sup> *Euangelisch magazijn* (1774–1778; 2nd ed. 1785); *Nieuw euangelisch magazijn* (1780–1784).

<sup>299</sup> In *Nieuw Euangelisch Magazijn* I-i (1780) and I-ii (1780). The *NB* similarly devoted attention to experiential piety and to pietist Lutherans. Cf. *NB* 1782-ii, 279–308, 327–348, with an exceptionally long essay on ‘The necessity of God’s inward, efficacious work of grace, argued from experience’; *NB* 1777-ii, 293–300, with a translation of a devotional piece by Johann Jacob Rambach. On the *Deutsche Christentum Gesellschaft*, see Holtrop, *Tussen piëtisme en Réveil*.

<sup>300</sup> The Scottish church at Rotterdam had called the orthodox Calvinist John Witherspoon to the ministry after the death of the (no less orthodox) Hugh Kennedy. Witherspoon declined; he was known in the Republic through his writings, among others his satire of the Scottish Moderates, *Ecclesiastical Characteristics* (1753); D.tr. *Kenschets van het bestaan en gedrag der kerkekyken* (s.a.); cf. the critical essay on the book in *De Denker* V (1768), 57–61.

<sup>301</sup> C. Brem, *De eer en leer der hervormde kerk gehandhaafd* [*The honour and doctrine of the Reformed Church maintained*] (1790); cf. also *NB* 1786-ii, 28–41, with an essay on the *Diary* by ‘T.D.’ The *Diary* was written by the novelist Rhijnvis Feith, who



'Christian Batavus' to launch a translation of Jonathan Edwards' treatise on the will.<sup>302</sup> Via translations and prefaces, Brem similarly propagated writings by the English puritan John Owen (1616–1683), the Scottish divine Thomas Boston (1677–1732), and the Calvinist evangelical John Newton (1725–1807). He maintained contacts with both Newton and the 'particular' (predestinarian) Baptist Abraham Booth, and had a high esteem for George Whitefield and Gisbert Bonnet. From the latter Brem derived his views on the 'reasonableness' of Christianity.<sup>303</sup>

Like Krom, Brem participated in the prolific and unprecedented growth of missionary activity in the period around 1800. In England alone three missionary societies were founded in the final decade of the eighteenth century, including the London Missionary Society (1795). Similar societies sprang up in the first half of the nineteenth century in Switzerland, Germany, France, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the United States.<sup>304</sup> On 19 December 1797, a group of Dutchmen, including Brem, Krom and Verster, established the Dutch Missionary Society for the Propagation and Advancement of Christianity, Especially Among Heathens.<sup>305</sup> The initiator was Theodorus van der Kemp (1747–1811), a physician and former soldier who had experienced a conversion and had contacts with the London Missionary Society.<sup>306</sup> In its official papers, the Dutch Missionary Society claimed to be averse to undermining either the ecclesiastical or the social order, and to pursue only the advancement of true Christianity in

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maintained contacts with Verster; both sympathized strongly with evangelicalism, missions, and Patriotism.

<sup>302</sup> J. Edwards, *A careful and strict enquiry into the modern prevailing notion of that freedom of the will* (1754); D.tr. *Een bepaald en nauwkeurig onderzoek van de thans heerschende denkbeelden over de vrijheid van den wil* (1774). 'Christianus Batavus' dedicated the book to the Dutch 'Remonstrant-Reformed', indicating his opposition to Reformed Nicodemists. Brem later annotated Edwards' *Concerning the end which God created the world* (1765); D.tr. *Verhandeling over Gods laatste einde in de schepping der waereld* (1788); he obtained the book from the Baptist Abraham Booth.

<sup>303</sup> Van Ekeris, 'Ter bevordering van de kennis'. Brem had contacts with other orthodox Calvinist translators, such as Jan Ross and Marinus van Werkhoven (who translated Booth's writings).

<sup>304</sup> Neill, *History of Christian missions*, 243–60; Cracknell, *Justice, courtesy and love*, Chapter 1.

<sup>305</sup> Kruijff, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche Zendelinggenootschap*; Boneschanker, *Het Nederlandsch Zendeling Genootschap*. Note that most of the initial members had previously contributed to the *Haagsch Genootschap*.

<sup>306</sup> Enklaar, *Life and work of Dr. J.Th. van der Kemp*.

the hearts of heathens abroad and the 'common man' at home.<sup>307</sup> This pursuit was to be the result of mutual effort, irrespective of denominational distinctions. Convinced that missionary work should be done by all who believed in Christ the Saviour, Krom held an address on 'the great promise of the calling of the gentiles in the era of the New Covenant', which earned him the criticism of his colleagues. His own concern, however, was to advocate Moravian methods: a clear and simple preaching without superfluous learning, touching directly the heart of the common man.<sup>308</sup>

No less than evangelicalism as such, late eighteenth-century missions exemplified the polite religious public. The Bible, said one member of the Missionary Society, is 'the Book of true politeness [*beschaafdheid*].' It contains a 'pure and excellent moral philosophy' and 'the true grounds and rules of politeness.' Only the Bible can turn us into 'truly polite people'; for it is the exclusive font of enlightenment and civilization.<sup>309</sup> A discussion developed in the Missionary Society on the question of whether heathens ought to be civilized before they were taught the Christian religion, or whether Christianity and civilization were inextricably connected.<sup>310</sup> In either case, the inward moral conviction of polite or civilized men and women was seen as the basis of the religious public. Conversion and civilization had essentially the same purpose, the education and spiritual moulding (*vorming* in Dutch, or *Bildung* in German) of citizens. To put it another way, the basis for the success of missions in this period was not a sudden outburst of divine grace, as traditional accounts have often contended. Missions reflected the premise of the polite public, that inward convictions based on simple Christian beliefs and morals could, and should, be disseminated freely.<sup>311</sup> Van Alphen, another warm supporter of missions, similarly defined the polite public as a 'Kingdom of truth and virtue' based on 'enlightenment' and 'morality'. This kingdom, he claimed, formed the basis of the civil and moral order, for civil perfection was founded on moral perfection,

<sup>307</sup> *Gedenkschriften van het Nederlandsch Zendeling-Genootschap*, I, X–XI, 31–32.

<sup>308</sup> H.J. Krom, *Groote belofte van de roeping der heidenen* (1799), 56–57; the classis refused to approve publication. In the *Zegepraal der waarheid over het ongelooft* [*The triumph of truth over unbelief*] (1801), 30–31, Krom argued strongly in favour of church unification, based not on a 'lifeless confession', but on simple Christian faith.

<sup>309</sup> *Gedenkschriften van het Nederlandsch Zendeling-Genootschap*, I, 68–70.

<sup>310</sup> On this, see Boone, *Bekering en beschaving*.

<sup>311</sup> Van Rooden, *Religieuze regimes*, 121–146; Van Eijnatten, 'Civilizing the Kingdom'.

which in turn was based on religious perfection, which was identical to the religion of the Gospel. Only when the Gospel is preached purely, believed reverently, and experienced forcefully, will a nation have achieved that stage of moral perfection at which it can truly comprehend civil freedom.<sup>312</sup> On the other side of the religious spectrum, the Mennonite Cornelis de Vries expressed his belief that when the earth is full of the knowledge of God (Jes. 11:9), ‘*politeness and humaneness* will be general’, the peoples of the world will be united, and Christians live in mutual charity.<sup>313</sup>

Missions, then, reflected the polite religious public as a realm of citizens who had to be, and could be, inwardly educated and civilized. These considerations underlay publications such as the *Means to disseminate evangelical knowledge among our countrymen* (1798), by Jacob Hinlôpen.<sup>314</sup> Educating the common man as a potentially useful member of the Christian nation had become both a prerequisite and an aim of the polite public. Moral weeklies had been hammering at the point since at least the 1760s. If there was one thing the spectators regarded as a main priority, this was a fundamental reform of religious education. Their general message was that authoritarian methods of the confessional public sphere had to be replaced by new educational techniques. Children, they claimed, were still required to memorize the contents of obsolete question-and-answer booklets like those of the puritan Jacobus Borstius (1612–1680). Subsequently they were indoctrinated by means of Hellenbroek’s outline of divine truths and the Heidelberg Catechism. Village schoolteachers and town catechizers were notorious for their ignorance, declared the spectators, and their policy of convincing pupils by the cane merely demonstrated their inability to do so by reason. To become a catechizer, a candidate only had to learn by heart the Catechism and a number of explanations by reputable divines. The catechizer’s main ambition in life was to preach to a congregation, but since he could not do so officially he consorted with despicable *oefenaars*. He emulated the official clergy by buying a minister’s hat, a large wig, and

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<sup>312</sup> [H. van Alphen], *Predikt het Euangelium allen creaturen!* [*Preach the Gospel to all creatures!*] (1801), pp. 24, 27, 70–71, 157.

<sup>313</sup> *VL* 1773-ii, 525–537, 573–581, at 537; the essay by ‘C.d.V.’ concerned proofs for the truth of Christianity derived from its rapid dissemination; the author made use of writings by James Foster.

<sup>314</sup> J. Hinlôpen, *Middelen, ter verbreiding van Evangelische kennis onder onze landgenooten* (1798).

an old coat, so that he could dominate both the congregation and the local minister. Catechizers, moreover, were even more prone to factionalism than the clergy, and it was this semi-articulate officialdom which in the second half of the century kept alive the obsolete distinctions between Voetians and Cocceians, and attacked all deviant beliefs.<sup>315</sup> No wonder that prejudice was ingrained in the Dutch people! Traditional theology was likened to an old Gothic building with very many, very small windows admitting very little light.<sup>316</sup> Common prejudice was explicitly combated in Van Hamelsveld's *Well-meaning counsellor*, a religious weekly intended to tutor the 'common man'.<sup>317</sup> The consequences of archaic instruction were explained in the fable about the children who examined the combustible properties of a live salamander by throwing the pitiful beast into a fire; they had, unfortunately, inherited the popular belief that salamanders were fireproof.<sup>318</sup> The debate on education reflected church life. The Reformed and Lutheran critics of new theological developments often derived from the lower social strata. In the Lutheran conflict of 1791, for example, which led to a schism in the Dutch Lutheran church, artisans, mariners, journeymen, and carpenters with pietist leanings were led by catechizers and schoolmasters who made the characteristic demand: the preaching of old familiar truths by regenerated ministers. They were opposed by 'persons from a respectable middle class and a civilized education and conduct' (as the educated elite described itself).<sup>319</sup>

In this respect, the literary career of Wolff and Deken is, again, exemplary. When we were young, lamented the ladies, we were required to read books as unsuitable for little children as Cartesian philosophy. If only we had been given a paraphrase of the Bible, instead of being compelled to learn catechisms by heart!<sup>320</sup> They co-authored a poem with the characteristic title *The obligation of the Netherlands to maintain useful societies and associations* (1779). Betje Wolff published an *Essay on upbringing* (1779), in which she advised mothers

<sup>315</sup> *De Nederlandsche Spectator*, IV (1752), 73–80; Hartog, *De spectatoriale geschriften van 1741–1800*, 268–278.

<sup>316</sup> *De Recensent* IV (1793), 116–118, on a book by the orthodox Bartholomeus Ouboter.

<sup>317</sup> *De welmeenende raadgever* (1791).

<sup>318</sup> *VL* 1780-ii, 445.

<sup>319</sup> Quoted in Kooiman, 'Het ontstaan van de herstelde Evangelisch-lutherse gemeente', 181–182, 193.

<sup>320</sup> Wolff and Deken, *Brieven over verscheiden onderwerpen*, III, 280.

to teach their children according to Johannes Martinet and Samuel Clarke. In *Economic songs* (1781), Wolff and Deken appealed to the industry and solidarity of Dutch burgers (eliciting the comment of an orthodox reviewer that piety, not the practice of civil virtue opened the way to heaven). In 1781, they published a book, 'also suited to the understanding of the common man', called *Educational conversation on the faith and moral philosophy of Christians*.<sup>321</sup> Probably following contemporary German usage, they called the volume a 'housebook' (*huisboek*, *Hausbuch*), since it served the practical needs of common households rather than adding to the speculative superfluities of polemic divinity. The book typically avoided specific doctrines and catered to the religious needs of all denominations. Dedicated to the Fatherland, which Wolff and Deken wished to serve by furnishing it with 'not only active and able Subjects but Religious Citizens too,' it emphasized the basic unity of faith of the Protestant nation. Religion fosters morality, hallows the laws and is intimately connected with liberty, they claimed. The common man must be freed from the blind ignorance that has enchained him for so long, so that he will understand (contrary to what the Calvinist catechizers make him believe) that his spirit is perfectible, his heart good, and his mind able to think independently.

Traditional catechizers like Borstius and Hellenbroek remained popular among Calvinists with pietist sympathies, and their writings were reissued throughout the nineteenth century. Most divines, however, supported educational reforms, and strove to conquer the mind and heart of the *gemene man*, the common man.<sup>322</sup> Bible translations, Bible histories, paraphrases, catechisms, and didactic tracts, all intended for the common man, appeared in abundance on the Dutch market. Often they were inspired (apart from Rousseau)<sup>323</sup> by major German

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<sup>321</sup> *Nederlands verpligting* (1779); *Proeve over de opvoeding* (1779); *Oeconomische liedjes* (1781); *Onderwijzend gesprek, over het geloof en de zedenleer der Christenen* (1781).

<sup>322</sup> With regard to orthodox circles: 'Treatise on the best means of instilling a sense of the significance of religion in the common man', in: *PGVCG* (1792), by Helperus Ritzema van Lier (1764–1793), a pastor in Cape Town and a blood relation of Hofstede.

<sup>323</sup> Even Rousseau's *Emile* was, however, mainly appreciated via Germany; cf. the Kampen 1790 translation, which contained annotations by Resewitz, Ehlers, Villaume, Trapp, Campe, Stuve and Heusinger. Cf. *VB* 1790-i, 662: in Germany, pedagogy is studied with greater zeal than anywhere else in the civilized world, by extremely able and honest men. On Rousseau, cf. Gobbers, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Holland*.

educationists like Salzmann, Campe, and Rosenmüller.<sup>324</sup> The latter instructed children in humility, modesty and peacefulness, and in social rank as a divine ordination (Patriot reviewers tended to criticize the latter aspect).<sup>325</sup> There was even a call, again reflecting German voices, for a précis of the Bible.<sup>326</sup> In North Holland, a society was established by a number of clergymen under the motto 'For the benefit of Christendom'. Their aim was to prevent religious decline by disseminating proper doctrine and pointing out the faults in contemporary education. One of the essay questions posed by the society concerned the possibility of writing a textbook on basic religious and moral truths for the young.<sup>327</sup> For the Society for the Good of the Public educational reform was a main priority.<sup>328</sup> The Society issued collections of prize-winning essays on the best way to acquaint the poor with the Bible (1798), on irreligion as a source of unhappiness and religion as a fount of felicity (1799), on the way to restore reverence for public worship (1802), on religion and pleasure (1803), and so on.<sup>329</sup> The Society promoted scriptural knowledge and religious education, and stimulated the writing and publication of simple books on practical moral issues (for instance, how should servants conduct themselves?). Characteristic of the Society were essays like *The significance of true popular Enlightenment* (1800) by a minister from Krefeld, who elaborated on the 'pure spirit of Christendom' that will arise out of the ruins of human institutions, rid the world of sectarianism, and leave only Christian citizens.<sup>330</sup> Part of the campaign to raise the common man from the sorry slough of ignorance had

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<sup>324</sup> With regard specifically to religious education, e.g. C.G. Salzmann, *Über die wirksamsten Mittel, Kindern die Religion beizubringen* (1780); D.tr. *Ontwerp ter proeve, hoe men op de beste wyze kinderen, van jongs af, tot godsdienst kan opleiden* (1790). Salzmann, *Anweisung zu einer zwar nicht vernünftigen, aber doch modischen Erziehung der Kinder* (1781); D.tr. *Aanleiding tot eene onverstandige opvoeding der kinderen* (1791).

<sup>325</sup> J.G. Rosenmüller, *Erster Unterricht in der Religion für Kinder* (1771); D.tr. *Eenvoudig onderwijs in den godsdienst, voor kinderen* [1795].

<sup>326</sup> *VL* 1794-i, 521-528, with reference to *Die Bibel, ein Werk der göttlichen Weisheit* (1787-1788) by Daniel Joachim Köppen (1736-1807), a conservative Pomeranian minister who opposed the idea of a précis; D.tr. *De Bybel een werk der godlyke wysheid* (1792-1794).

<sup>327</sup> Discussed in *VL* 1786-i, 322-324.

<sup>328</sup> The *Haagsch Genootschap* also issued tracts for the 'common man'.

<sup>329</sup> Aart de Groot, "God wil het waar geluk van het algemeen."

<sup>330</sup> [H.W. van der Ploeg], *Het belang der waare volksverlichting* (1800) (an answer to the question, to what extent can enlightenment be regarded as useful?); quoted in De Groot, "God wil het waar geluk van het algemeen", 242.

an economic purpose; or, conversely, writers recognized that the economic demands of a commonwealth in decline was in dire need of an informed and knowledgeable population. Hence, the Holland Society of Sciences in 1777 opened an essay competition concerning the question: which are the best means to improve the minds and morals of the poor.<sup>331</sup> True enough, not all Dutch preachers supported the anonymous author who asserted that pulpits ought to be used to instil civil virtues; or the reviewer who believed that preachers should provide their congregations with information concerning vices detrimental to their health.<sup>332</sup> Yet, even De Perponcher produced a *General catechism for young Dutch citizens*, which provided counselling on religious as well as moral and political matters. A most useful book, commented the press, since the adherents of any political faction or religious denomination could use it, and since it fostered spiritual concord in the nation.<sup>333</sup> By then, the true Christian as the best patriot had become a common theme in poetry societies.<sup>334</sup>

To Dutch reviewers, a jarring instance of domestic backwardness was afforded by the Catholic priest Petrus Schouten, who attempted to instruct the youth on the holy sacrament of the altar—not exactly a convincing proof of Catholic enlightenment.<sup>335</sup> The patronizing attitude of educationists towards religious traditions and orthodoxies is aptly illustrated by Fokko Liefsting's *Humble thoughts concerning some popular notions in the Reformed Church, their sources and remedies*, published anonymously in 1791.<sup>336</sup> Liefsting claimed to make a constructive

<sup>331</sup> Mijnhardt, 'Het Nut en de genootschapsbeweging', 194–195.

<sup>332</sup> [Anon.], *Redenvoeringen voor Nederlands jongelingschap* [Addresses to the Dutch youth] (1777), preface. *VL* 1792-i, 412–415, with a review of *Von den Lastern, die sich an der Gesundheit der Menschen selbst rächen* (1773), by the Swiss physician Daniel Langhans (1728–1813); D.tr. *Verhandelingen over de ondeugden* (1792). Cf. also Gerrit van Bosvelt, who used a German model for his 'catechism of health': *Proeve van een Katechismus der gezondheid* (1793).

<sup>333</sup> [W.E. de Perponcher], *Algemeene catechismus voor de Nederlandsche burger-jeugd* (1783); *VL* 1783-i, 420–422. Cf. also [Anon.], *Kleine catechismus der vryheid, ten dienste van den gemeenen man en der kinderen* [Brief catechism of freedom, for the use of the common man and children] (1784), written by a 'friend of the people.'

<sup>334</sup> E.g. the poem by the orthodox Johannes Christiaan Mohr († 1787), in: *Gedichten van het Genootschap, ten spreuke voerende, Hier na volmaakter* (1785). Another poem by Mohr was called 'The advantages of the Christian religion to civil society.'

<sup>335</sup> P. Schouten, *Uitbreiding van het onderwijs der Roomsch-Catholijke jeugd, wegens 't heilig sacrament des altaars* [Extension of the Catholic youth's education, concerning the holy sacrament of the altar] (1788); *VB* 1789-i, 492–493.

<sup>336</sup> [F. Liefsting], *Zedige gedachten over eenige volksbegrippen in de gereformeerde kerk, derzelver bronnen en geneesmiddelen* [1791]; favourable reviews in *VL* 1791-i, 552–556; *VB*

contribution to the well-being of his church, but in effect portrayed popular Calvinism as an obsolete remnant of a barbaric and irascible age. He began by pointing out that in any 'civilized Nation' there were bound to be two sets of religious beliefs; the one adhered to by the more competent and the more enlightened, the other upheld by the common people. The second, popular set of beliefs, acquired via tradition and instruction rather than philosophical discourse, consisted of two kinds of notions. Some notions were innocent and merely the result of an inferior civilization of the intellect (*mindere verstandsbeschaving*). Others, however, harmed religion and resulted from providing infantile understandings with the wrong education. Of similar calibre was a *Treatise on the necessity and importance of making the common man wiser* (1794). The Reformed minister who authored it, Johannes Stolk (1761–1834), was banished to Prussia for his pains.<sup>337</sup> One of the moral virtues properly understood by the polite pioneers of enlightened civilization was, of course, toleration. Regulations recently drawn up by the Prussian authorities at Geldern (not far from the Dutch borders) were held up as an example of helpful reform, leading to greater tolerance. They stated that the prayers recited at Latin schools should respect the religious views of students who were not Roman Catholic.<sup>338</sup> The eccentric Dr. Bahrdt was the director of a school based on toleration as a principle: the so-called *Philanthropin* at Marschlins. The teachers there were required to tolerate all religious views, Lutheran, Reformed and Catholic, and to instil toleration into the minds of their pupils.<sup>339</sup> Such views would certainly have been supported by the Arminian Jan Konijnenburg (1758–1831), professor at the Remonstrant Seminary, publicist, radical democrat, and Unitarian. His *Contributions to the happiness of mankind* evinced a strong interest in educational reform, and contained translations of writings by Campe, Salzmann and the Berlin philosopher Peter Villaume (1746–1806). Konijnenburg criticized educational programmes aimed at memorization (of the Heidelberg Catechism) rather

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1791-i, 253–264; *De Recensent* III (1792), 366–375. Liefsting's treatise was refuted by Cornelis Brem, *Brieven en gesprekken*, Rotterdam 1791.

<sup>337</sup> [J. Stolk], *Verhandeling over de noodzakelijkheid en aangelegenheid om den gemeenen man wijzer te maken* [1794].

<sup>338</sup> *Reglement voor de Latynsche scholen in het Pruissich Gelderland* (1785); *VL* 1785-i, 341–348.

<sup>339</sup> [Anon.], *Plan van philanthropynsche opvoeding* [*Plan of philanthropic education*] (1777); critical reviews in *NB* 1778-i, 332–341; *NB* 1779-i, 106–110.



than comprehension (of a few simple truths), but also included an article called ‘The Republic of atheists or an examination of the disastrous influence of the atheistic system on sociability.’<sup>340</sup> Education, in brief, guaranteed the future survival of the polite public—whose existence to many still seemed extremely tenuous. Simple doctrines, practical morality, reasonableness, and piety, instilled all at once into the mind of the common man, were bound to ensure the definitive breakthrough of Christian politeness.

### 7.7 THE VIRTUES OF DIVERSITY

In 1789, a booklet of some 140 pages was published in Amsterdam, addressed *To my Protestant fellow Christians in France*.<sup>341</sup> The text was supposed to have been translated from the French, but this was simply a ruse to disguise the book’s origins. Readers probably supposed that the author was an ex-revolutionary exiled to France who had smuggled his manuscript to a Dutch publisher.<sup>342</sup> In fact, he was a Patriot sympathizer living quietly in Holland after the restoration. As Simon Vuyk has shown, the author was Boudewijn van Rees, whom we encountered previously as an eloquent advocate of the separation of church and state.<sup>343</sup> While many of the writings on toleration he quoted stemmed from the early eighteenth century, Van Rees was also particularly aware of recent theological developments in Germany. One of the sources he had obviously ransacked for arguments and references was the Latin treatise on fundamental articles by the German divine Guilelmus Crichton.<sup>344</sup>

<sup>340</sup> Vuyk, *Verdraagzame gemeente*, 119–124, 128–147.

<sup>341</sup> [B. van Rees], *Aan mijne protestantsche medechristenen* (1789). The Greek motto on the title page is 1 Cor. 10:29 (‘for why is my liberty judged of another man’s conscience?’).

<sup>342</sup> The author shows a keen interest in contemporary French affairs. Cf. [Van Rees], *Aan mijne protestantsche medechristenen*, sig. \*8<sup>r</sup> note, where he suspects that the upheavals in France will subside now that Necker is leading the ministry; apparently the book was written during Necker’s term of office between August 1788 and July 1789.

<sup>343</sup> Vuyk, *De verdraagzame gemeente*, 408, n. 23; see section 5.8 above.

<sup>344</sup> The author’s indebtedness to Crichton’s *Dissertationes duo* (1767) is evident indirectly from references (with corresponding page numbers) to, among others, classical sources, Thomasius, Luther, Melancthon, the Wittenberger Lutheran Johan Meisner (1615–1681; Meisner was attacked by Abraham Calov for his lenient views regarding the Reformed), and ‘the very orthodox Lutheran’ Johann Bergius (1587–1658;

Van Rees' text and a prize essay by Paulus van Hemert may serve as illustrations of contemporary views on a quality every polite Protestant was now expected to profess and possess: respect for religious plurality. This section, is, therefore, concerned to show the outcome of the eighteenth-century toleration debate in the emergent polite public.

*To my Protestant fellow Christians in France* is unquestionably one of the best Dutch tracts on toleration written in the later eighteenth century.<sup>345</sup> Van Rees addressed the paradox that religious diversity is the true basis of concord. In his preface, he made clear that his book was concerned solely with ecclesiastical toleration, which he considered a logical concomitant to civil toleration. He observed that civil toleration had become widespread in Protestant states. Nobody was persecuted and threatened with physical punishment for deviating from the state religion. Hopeful signs included the measures regarding religious toleration taken by the Swedish king Gustav III in 1779; the *Toleranzpatent* signed by the Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II in October 1781, granting limited freedom of worship to non-Roman Catholics and removing the civil restrictions to which they had been subject; the reforms put through by the French king Louis XVI and his minister Malesherbes in 1787;<sup>346</sup> and the Prussian edict of 1788, which also ensured civil toleration. However, most countries were not yet ready for the introduction of civil toleration in its broadest scope, which would entail the abolition of state religions and the unification of free denominations. It may take centuries before the nations are ripe for ecclesiastical toleration, religious freedom, and the reunion of a divided Christendom! Strangely enough, civil toleration, on which so much has been written in this century (by 'Locke, Barbeyrac, and others'), was still a neglected topic. Even the learned and intelligent men who contributed to purifying theology in recent years purposely refrained from discussing universal Christian liberty. Surely, they acknowledged that full civil toleration—the

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actually a German Calvinist); on the latter, see Nischan, 'John Bergius'. On Crichton, see section 6.4 above.

<sup>345</sup> Cf. the positive reviews in *VL* 1789-i, 398–401; *VB* 1789-i, 493–496.

<sup>346</sup> This event was given due attention in the periodicals; e.g. *NB* 1788-ii, 195–199, on the French edict of January 1788. Cf. Claude-Carloman de Rulhière (1735–1791), *Éclaircissements historiques sur les causes de la révocation de l'Édit de Nantes* (1788); D.tr. *Geschiedkundige ophelderingen, betreffende de oorzaaken der herroeping van het Edict van Nantes* (1788).

abolition of state religions and dominant churches—is a prerequisite for any further development with regard to toleration. The very idea of a state religion was derived from a heathen confusion of the religious and secular spheres. If religion and politics had not been mixed up, a lot of unnecessary oppression and persecution could have been avoided, the Reformation would have made much greater progress, and Protestants would have been reunited long ago. But as long as the preachers of the state religion are regarded as an integral element in the political constitution, and are accorded the honours, prestige and advantages denied to others; and as long as members of the reigning faith are the exclusive recipients of civil advantages, and North America's lead is not followed, the old pagan ways will remain unchanged. Thus, it is not to be expected that the established clergy of any nation will introduce full ecclesiastical toleration, for they are compromised by their political obligations. Even if established clerics should wish to change certain doctrines, they are bound to confessions fixed by political decree. By contrast, the tolerated sects (including the French addressees of the book), are bound only to God and Jesus Christ, have no interests of state, and are not subject to the temptations of honour and power.

The book is divided into four sections. In the first section the author is concerned to show that differences among Protestants are non-fundamental and do not justify the existence of separate denominations.<sup>347</sup> Christianity has, in fact, only one fundamental truth, which is belief in Jesus Christ. This is evident from many biblical texts, but also from a small but excellent work written in the previous century by a clever and judicious author—none other than *The reasonableness of Christianity* by John Locke. Other truths follow from this one fundamental truth, but it is impossible to determine how many.<sup>348</sup> People judge differently and therefore arrive at different truths. Yet, they can fully agree on a limited number of truths derived from Reason (belief in God) and Revelation (belief in Jesus Christ as God's ambassador). All other differences are non-essential, as long as people confess their beliefs with true sincerity.<sup>349</sup> Van Rees continued by distinguishing between religion, which consists of a few

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<sup>347</sup> [Van Rees], *Aan mijne protestantsche medechristenen*, 1–34.

<sup>348</sup> The author here refers to various writings by J.A. Turretini.

<sup>349</sup> At this point Van Rees refers to John Calvin, a theologian whose support he is anxious to claim, since he quotes the *Institutio* repeatedly in his book.

clear and simple truths, and theology, which is not essential to salvation and accessible only to the learned. In passages reflecting his familiarity with texts written by Drieberge, Stinstra and Hoadly, he argued in the second section that the division of Christendom into so many sects contradicts the nature and true constitution of Christ's church.<sup>350</sup> A labyrinth of biblical references served to prove that Christ was appointed by his Father as the only lawgiver of his kingdom and the only head of his church. It is illegitimate to establish the views of a fallible synod as 'so-called secondary rules of faith', under the pretext of maintaining discipline, or to use them as binding laws that must be recognized on pain of excommunication. No one who accepts the Christian religion can be excluded from the church, including Roman Catholics—although the latter are subject to exclusion until they renounce their doctrine of ecclesiastical infallibility. In any case, no synod has ever been able to eradicate heresy.<sup>351</sup> Freedom will not lead to confusion; for that matter, the history of the Christian church itself has been one of division, disorder and unrest ever since laws were devised to circumscribe religious liberty. In other words, the freedom to judge for oneself in religious matters is the one certain way to achieve unity.<sup>352</sup>

In the third section, Van Rees argued that the Reformation itself was based on an appeal to Christian liberty, and that Protestantism rules out the imposition of any confession.<sup>353</sup> Luther, Calvin, Melancthon—no Reformer ever claimed that doctrines could not be improved. These principles were not maintained when Protestantism settled down. Once again, a clerical hierarchy arose, though this time the clergy did not claim in so many words to possess infallibility, but only acted as if they did. The new clergy did not demand subscription insofar as (*quatenus*) the formularies agreed with the Bible, but because (*quia*) they did so. The Reformers, on the other hand, had used confessions only to declare publicly their personal beliefs and to provide simple believers with an aid to faith. This is precisely what a confession should be: a plain handbook for simple Christians, as well as a manual for theology students by which they

<sup>350</sup> [Van Rees], *Aan mijne protestantsche medechristenen*, 35–79.

<sup>351</sup> The author's account on the irregular procedures at the early councils is based, among others, on Mosheim; he also mentions the *Grundrisz der Geschichte der christlichen Kirche* (1782) by the Göttingen professor Ludwig Timotheus Spittler (1752–1810).

<sup>352</sup> A similar argument in *De Recensent I* (1787), 39–40.

<sup>353</sup> [Van Rees], *Aan mijne protestantsche medechristenen*, 80–112.

may be trained to become sensible and unprejudiced advocates of the people's felicity. Synods, then, are not wholly superfluous. If they are attended by knowledgeable, accomplished, pious, dignified, moderate, and peaceful men, they can function as a means to inquire into the truth, without, however, forcing through any decision concerning doctrine. Van Rees even suggested that a synod be held in about 25 years, so that the new (German) developments in theology could be discussed and summarized. Finally, in the fourth section he mentioned several historical precedents demonstrating that the idea of a Christian church based on unlimited freedom, mutual forbearance and brotherly communion, and encompassing all who believe in Jesus Christ, was not illusory.<sup>354</sup> The early Christians offer the best example of such a church. Other instances include the Dutch church prior to the Synod of Dort, the contemporary Anglican church, the Protestant congregations in France, German Lutherans (who tolerated crypto-Calvinists), the state church of Brandenburg, Dutch Mennonites (who recently started reuniting)<sup>355</sup> and Dutch Remonstrants (whose ecclesiastical policies the author praised abundantly). Learned men argued the point, Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, Patrick, Burnet, Tillotson, Werenfels, Turretin, and many others. All in all, *To my Protestant fellow Christians in France* is an excellent, late eighteenth-century restatement of dissenting views of religious toleration, based on the paradox that non-confessional religious diversity is the best guarantee for peaceful concord. The book was explicitly if somewhat belatedly refuted by the orthodox Aernout Duircant, a contributor to the *Haagsch Genootschap*, who took exception to the author's cavalier treatment of synods. Making extensive use of Vitringa, Duircant demonstrated that, contrary to what Van Rees believed, Jerome, Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Melanchthon, Peter Martyr, Beza, and Mosheim all supported synodal authority.<sup>356</sup> Religious diversity was, in Duircant's orthodox view, a synonym for anarchy.

The last major treatment of toleration in the eighteenth-century Netherlands was an award-winning essay by the *enfant terrible* of Dutch theology, Paulus van Hemert. The essay, included with other con-

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<sup>354</sup> [Van Rees], *Aan mijne protestantsche medechristenen*, 113–130.

<sup>355</sup> According to Van Rees, four Mennonite congregations at Haarlem had reunited several years previously.

<sup>356</sup> A. Duircant, *Aanmerkingen op een verhandeling, getiteld, Aan myne protestantsche medechristenen in Frankryk* (1793).

tributions in an especially large volume, was an answer to the prize question posed by Teyler's Theological Society in 1788. The topic in itself would have been dynamite thirty or forty years earlier: 'How can the fundamental rule of Protestants best be explained and its plausibility proven conclusively, viz. that every sane Christian is entitled, and according to his capacities obliged, to judge for himself in religious matters?'<sup>357</sup> The jury regarded Van Hemert's essay as an outstanding achievement, and so it was; but because it appeared on the eve of the legal reforms of the Batavian Republic, it has never received much attention. We have encountered Paulus van Hemert (1756–1825) several times before. He had embarked on a promising career as a Reformed minister in 1781, but concluded after three years that he could not reconcile himself to the doctrines of the church.<sup>358</sup> The root of his objections concerned the church's claim that human reason is corrupt, which led to a heated debate on the subject with his former tutor Gisbert Bonnet. Van Hemert joined the Remonstrant Brotherhood in 1788 and became a professor at the Remonstrant Seminary in Amsterdam in 1790. Up to date on developments in German theology, he inaugurated with the above-mentioned address on accommodation theory. The Dutch theological *avant-garde* enthused about Van Hemert's achievements, ranking him, with none other than Steinbart, 'among those noble enlighteners of humanity' who sought to bring Christendom back to its original and fundamental simplicity.<sup>359</sup> In the later 1790s, Van Hemert would develop into the most ardent Dutch supporter of Immanuel Kant.

In his essay for Teyler's Theological Society, Van Hemert indicated at the outset that his essay was concerned with both freedom of inquiry and freedom of speech, since the one implies the other. The essay is divided into three chapters in which he respectively explained and proved the 'Protestant rule' and countered possible objections. In Chapter I, he demonstrated the legitimacy of the contention that

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<sup>357</sup> P. van Hemert, 'Antwoord op de vraag (. . .)', in: *Verhandelingen TGG XI*, 1–178. A review of Van Hemert's essay was included in the *Journal Encyclopédique IV–XV* (1792), 305–312.

<sup>358</sup> These included predestination. Van Hemert translated *The mystery hid from the ages, or the salvation of all men* (1784), by Charles Chauncy (1705–1787), the American adversary of George Whitefield; D.tr. *De verborgenheid, die van alle eeuwen en geslachten verborgen was, openbaar gemaakt* (1787).

<sup>359</sup> *De Recensent I* (1787), 34. In *Jongenen*, 41 it is suggested that Van Hemert was, in fact, the translator of Steinbart's *System*.

Scripture is the only rule of faith.<sup>360</sup> It was the core of the sixteenth-century Reformation as well as the Dutch Revolt, he explained. Erasmus, Melanchthon, Luther and Calvin, who followed in the footsteps of Tertullian, Augustine and Jerome, had defended the *sola scriptura* principle. Of course, Jesus Christ first taught the rule. If many Protestants failed to apply it, they could hardly deny that the rule is the be-all and end-all of Protestantism. Next, Van Hemert provided a more detailed explanation of the rule. To outline it, he analyzed the letter sent in 1725 by the States General to Venice. He observed that a Protestant Christian, as opposed to a Catholic one, regards Scripture, specifically the teachings of Christ and his apostles, as the only infallible rule of faith. A Protestant necessarily takes recourse to reason, since this is the only means to judge the truth of doctrines, or be convinced by them. A Protestant rejects everything that does not accord with Scripture or contradicts reason. Notwithstanding the most learned of synods, a Protestant accepts no doctrine not taught expressly by Jesus and his apostles. A Protestant respects the freedom of others to examine, test and, if need be, disagree with religious propositions. A Protestant recognizes that freedom of inquiry is of little use if he does not also have the right to confess publicly, proclaim and disseminate with all due modesty any religious opinion that he holds to be true.

In Chapter II Van Hemert demonstrated the plausibility of the Protestant principle of free inquiry by discussing the reasons why it should be accepted. In the first place, the rule should be acknowledged because it is true and based on incontrovertible principles.<sup>361</sup> Man possesses the indefeasible natural right to judge for himself in religious matters. Van Hemert substantiated this by pointing out that man would not have been furnished with reason and understanding if he were not to use them; that man possesses a natural urge to foster his own good; that God's aim in creating man was to make him happy, which implies the free use of his capacities; that reason does not follow the will, so that a man cannot will himself not to judge rationally; and that to deny others this right means, in effect, that one denies it oneself. Nor has the natural right to free inquiry ever been revoked. Van Hemert provided the familiar account of

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<sup>360</sup> Van Hemert, 'Antwoord op de vraag (...)', 6–38.

<sup>361</sup> Van Hemert, 'Antwoord op de vraag (...)', 40–79.

the formation of the civil state for the sake of mutual protection, as it had been put forward earlier by, among others, Van der Meersch.<sup>362</sup> He then showed that a Christian also has the obligation to make use of his natural right to free inquiry and to disseminate acquired truths.<sup>363</sup> Various arguments support the obligation to inquire into religious matters, such as man's ineluctable rationality, which enjoins him to make use of his faculties, and man's fallibility, the recognition of which bids him to try to distinguish truth from error. Extensive quotations from the Bible further show that Christ and the apostles acknowledged the natural obligation to inquire into the truth, and that the nature of the church entails freedom of inquiry. All theological writers recognize the right to free inquiry, but many deny the right to speak out openly. According to the recent Prussian *Religionsedikt*, for instance, the Reformed, Lutherans and Catholics are required to tolerate each other but are also warned not to proclaim publicly their own particular views. Van Hemert continued his essay by proving that a Christian not only has the obligation to inquire into the truth, but also the duty to disseminate the truths he believes to have found.<sup>364</sup> The truth is often best ascertained when people write freely on religious issues in a public debate in which the one corrects the other. Besides, we have a natural obligation to enlighten each other and advance each other's happiness. The Bible too commands us to disclose publicly our thoughts on religion. Had Peter and his companions not said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men' (Acts 5:29), most of mankind would still have to make do without the Christian faith.

The second reason for following the Protestant rule concerning free inquiry is the fact that it fosters the happiness of both the individual and society.<sup>365</sup> To deny a man the free exercise of his faculties is to detract from his happiness. A society will clearly profit from the fact that its members are happy. But there is a more immediate connection between general well-being and freedom of inquiry. The latter results in true religious knowledge, and such religious awareness advances all kinds of social virtues. Societies that restrict religious liberty by formularies notoriously perpetuate error, superstition,

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<sup>362</sup> See section 5.6 above.

<sup>363</sup> Van Hemert, 'Antwoord op de vraag (...)', 80–104.

<sup>364</sup> Van Hemert, 'Antwoord op de vraag (...)', 104–114.

<sup>365</sup> Van Hemert, 'Antwoord op de vraag (...)', 115–134.



hypocrisy, persecution, intolerance, and disrespect for religion. Van Hemert singled out sincerity as one of the essential social virtues strengthened by the exercise of religious liberty. ‘*National* sincerity,’ he claimed, ‘is certainly harmed when Liberty is infringed upon by established Confessions and by the benefits accompanying them.’ To avoid losing their benefits or falling into poverty many (in particular the Reformed clergy, said Van Hemert, speaking from experience) are tempted to ignore the dictates of their own conscience or to disguise their true opinions by concealment, equivocation, and device. In addition, scholarship and a sense of responsible citizenship are greatly encouraged by the exercise of religious liberty. ‘Religious and civil Liberty are closely connected; the one cannot exist without the other.’<sup>366</sup>

In the final chapter, Van Hemert discussed the various objections that could be made to his discussion of religious liberty.<sup>367</sup> He disputed at length the Protestant clergy’s apparent belief in the infallibility of synods. Do they not know that only Christ is the supreme lawgiver of his church (as Hoadly pointed out)? Many ecclesiastics openly call for a general and free inquiry into religion, but what they really mean is an inquiry within the confines of their church’s formularies. This attitude is no better than the spurious contentions to the same effect asserted by the Roman hierarchy. The Protestant clergy further claim to be anxious about the scepticism resulting from free inquiry. Radical scepticism, rejoined Van Hemert, is accidental to, and not a consequence of, free inquiry. In fact, prohibitions on free inquiry are the main cause of contemporary unbelief. The inability of the clergy to maintain their views without oppression only gives vent to the mockery of deists ranging from Voltaire to Mirabeau. Freedom of inquiry, the critics further contend, will lead to an explosion of sectarian groups and put religious concord farther out of reach than ever. Van Hemert responded with the claim that complete religious unity is impossible, that God has decreed diversity, that Jesus never instructed his followers to pursue absolute concord, and

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<sup>366</sup> On this theme, see section 5.8. Cf. *VL* 1785-ii, 229–236, ‘On forbearance in religion and politics’ by ‘O.O.’ As a result of upbringing, prejudice, and individual experience, men will judge differently. The only way to achieve concord in religion and politics is by instilling fear into people; in religion this is done by threatening with damnation, in politics by intimidation through force. Hence, forbearance is needed in both religious and political matters.

<sup>367</sup> Van Hemert, ‘Antwoord op de vraag (. . .)’, 135–178.

that such concord is a sign of ignorance and prejudice and a matter of outward show. Moreover, full religious liberty will necessarily lead to the disappearance of sects, since each person will then be allowed to entertain any religious view peculiar to himself. Freedom of inquiry will, in effect, inaugurate the reunion of Christendom! Free inquiry will lead to subversion of the state and civil society, ran another objection. Rubbish, said Van Hemert. The Egyptians introduced polytheism precisely because variety of opinion prevents rebellion (as Noodt and Warburton showed). Is it lawful to disseminate views that undermine piety and virtue? Yes, replied Van Hemert. If someone vents a godless and immoral opinion, it is certain to be rejected by the public. Anyway, who is able to judge the *possibly* harmful consequences of a particular opinion? Nobody, surely. The influence of speculative doctrine on morality is in any event negligible, and as long as opinions have no bearing on action, they cannot be damaging to society. What, however, to do with atheists? Must they be allowed to spread corrupting doctrines? They certainly must, answered Van Hemert. Only if atheists are allowed to make use of their natural right will it be possible for Christian thinkers to prove them wrong. Such considerations apart, Van Hemert's point was that atheists too have the right to voice their own views, as long as they do not misuse it by insulting believers, as, for example, d'Holbach had the habit of doing.<sup>368</sup>

Drawing on his predecessors in the Dutch toleration debate, partly by making extensive use of Van Rees' *To my Protestant fellow Christians in France*, Van Hemert reiterated many of the arguments previously put forward in defence of religious liberty. He clearly favoured the natural right argument, variously referring to Marcus Aurelius, Seneca and above all Cicero, as well as to Pufendorf, Noodt and Barbeyrac. He also emphasized the obligation to pursue the truth in order to enlighten mankind and advance the common good. He frequently quoted Justus van Effen, Zollikofer and Georg F. Meier, derived many examples from Richard Price's *Observations on the importance of the American Revolution, and the means of making it a benefit to the world* (1784), and cited Steinbart in condemning the 'esprit de corps' of

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<sup>368</sup> Note that Van Hemert (70–72) argues that an atheistic state cannot exist and that he refutes 'atheistic writings' which claim that purely political laws are to be preferred above religious injunctions. A society must ensure the religious education of its citizens, so that the number of unbelievers is kept at a minimum.

domineering ecclesiastics. Other sources he mentioned range from Tertullian, Augustine, Erasmus, Calvin, Grotius, and Heidanus to Gerard Brandt, Locke, Hoadly, John Sharp and Warburton. Van Hemert had done his homework well.

Van Hemert's defence of atheism as legitimate—if erroneous—is remarkable, and demonstrates the full-fledged development of the idea of a civilized Christian public based on freedom of speech and open debate.<sup>369</sup> He was not the first to argue the point. Two decades before an anonymous writer had observed, 'Certainly, it is better that freedom of thought results in one single unbeliever than that general ignorance prohibits all notions of true religion.'<sup>370</sup> Van Hemert, however, now defended the point openly. He also made clear the consequences of civilization—the process of 'further refinement, sophistication, and perfection', as he called it—for those who insisted on clinging to an authoritarian public sphere. A Christian is completely free to put forward his religious views; but, adds Van Hemert, he should use his own discretion to limit freedom of expression exclusively to doctrines having an immediate bearing on practical virtue. This was as effective a way as any to exclude from polite debate those orthodox writers who persevered in publicly discussing the speculative doctrine par excellence, predestination. The 'finer and nobler a man's sentiment is', the more he will be spurred on to examine the truth in freedom, Van Hemert claimed elsewhere, suggesting that those who held on to the formularies were neither refined nor noble. In his conception of the polite Christian public, Van Hemert had to contend with a characteristic paradox. He claimed that civilization greatly aids the pursuit of Christian truth, but also argued that the common people best understand that truth. The learned have a penchant for contrived doctrines, whereas the truth itself is simple. The only requirements needed to attain a proper understanding of religious truth are common sense, love for truth, modesty, a willingness to reject prejudice, and a determination to exercise charity. Yet, is it not the knowledgeable and civilized citizen, rather than the unrefined 'common' man, who possesses these qualities? Van Hemert waxed eloquent when condemning the ignorance, passion, obstinacy and intolerance of orthodox zealots, and alternatively prais-

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<sup>369</sup> Freedom of speech itself was a much-discussed topic in the Patriotic 1780s; cf. with regard to religion, the anonymous *Onderzoek over de vryheid, van zyne gevoelens mede te deelen* [*Inquiry into the freedom to make known one's opinions*] [c. 1783].

<sup>370</sup> *De Opmerker* I (1772–1773), 63.

ing the 'enlightened' knowledge of religion that leads to peace, charity, and unlimited toleration. His notion of the common man is, however, contradicted by the sway the traditional clergy was supposed to hold over the crowd, and by his contention that the obligation to exercise freedom of inquiry is directly proportional to a person's aptitude, talents and opportunity to do so. Thus, a well-educated and civilized urban citizen is under a greater obligation to examine the Bible than a poor peasant who has to use all his time to scrape a living.<sup>371</sup> But if a poor peasant cannot resort to reading and reasoning, he will also be unable to ascertain whether the simple truths offered to him from a civilized pulpit are any better than the traditional truths outlined in a ponderous sermon on the Heidelberg Catechism.

Van Hemert's essay certainly deserved the gold medal in Teyler's essay competition. The silver medals were won by Jacob Kuiper († 1825), Wiltetus B. Jelgersma (1755–1796), Willem de Vos (1738–1823) and Pieter Weiland (1754–1842). Kuiper and Vos were Mennonites; Van Hemert and Weiland had both converted from Calvinism to Arminianism; Jelgersma was a Reformed minister known to have been a fervent Patriot in the 1780s (Hemert, Weiland and especially Kuiper also sympathized with Patriotism). The authors, then, were either religious or political dissidents, or both. Jacob Kuiper, recommending Priestley's *Corruptions*, in his essay provided a solution to theological discord by appealing to the primacy of moral practice. There is no use in weighing the various arguments pro and contra a particular doctrine. The question that must be posed is, how does the acceptance or denial of a particular doctrine affect man's moral character? 'Moral utility is the touchstone of religious truth', as Jesus himself pointed out (John 7:17). Kuiper too broached the problem of civilization. 'A large Nation can change its confession all at once but not all the prejudices, popular faults, and popular ways of thought and behaviour that have become habitual and, as it were, second nature.' By curbing the authority of formularies and recognizing freedom of the press, all this can be changed. There will be unity in diversity, and Jeremiah's prophecy will be fulfilled: 'they shall all know me, saith the Lord' (Jer. 31:34).<sup>372</sup>

<sup>371</sup> Van Hemert, 'Antwoord op de vraag (...)', 37, 42, 51, 91, 95–96, 124–129, 135–141.

<sup>372</sup> J. Kuiper, 'Antwoord op de vraag (...)', in: *Verhandelingen TGG XI*, 211–216, 224–228, 235–241.

The other Mennonite, Willem de Vos, strongly emphasized the obligation to inquire into the truth. If the work of ‘Locke, Noodt, Barbeyrac’ can be improved in any way, it is on the connection between right and obligation, which these authors had tended to draw apart.<sup>373</sup> The Remonstrant Weiland contrasted the simplicity of the biblical message with the outward trappings and complex doctrines imposed by church leaders in order to obtain and maintain clerical authority. He believed that a new Bible translation would cure people of the erroneous assumption that everything said in the Bible is necessarily God’s Word. Weiland suggested that wise Protestant princes and states should unite to advance ‘an enlightened *Christendom*’ and appoint learned and impartial men to translate the Bible according to the intentions of the original. Also needed was a précis of the Bible containing only the bare necessities; it should be called ‘*the actual word of God, or: the Bible for the unschooled.*’<sup>374</sup> The most conservative piece was that by the Reformed minister Jelgersma. He focused throughout on the failings of the Roman Catholic Church, which makes his defence of the Protestant rule rather seem like forcing an open door. Moreover, he lent support to both ecclesiastical formularies and the institutional clergy by arguing, not illogically, that believers are bound to accept some things on authority, such as the accuracy of a Bible translation. As the highly critical *Reviewer* remarked, Jelgersma seemed to limit the right to free inquiry to those who inquired correctly. Who could provide the ‘correct’ standards of truth other than an organized clergy, and in what way did this position differ from the Roman Catholic?<sup>375</sup> Jelgersma retained the specious distinction between ecclesiastical and civil toleration, which had made such an impressive career in the eighteenth century, and which had implicitly lent support to the dominant church.<sup>376</sup> A couple of years later, in 1796, with the formal abolition of the Reformed Church as the public church, the distinction became obsolete.

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<sup>373</sup> W. de Vos, ‘Antwoord op de vraag (. . .)’, in: *Verhandelingen TGG XI*, 428–429; the section on obligation in this essay is nonetheless much shorter than that on right.

<sup>374</sup> P. Weiland, ‘Antwoord op de vraag (. . .)’, in: *Verhandelingen TGG XI*, 612–618.

<sup>375</sup> W.B. Jelgersma, ‘Antwoord op de vraag (. . .)’, in: *Verhandelingen TGG XI*, 300–320; *De Recensent III* (1792), 463–466.

<sup>376</sup> See section 5.5 above.

## EPILOGUE

### THE PURSUIT OF CIVILIZATION

The *Abt* Jerusalem, whose treatise *Von der Kirchenvereinigung* we discussed above,<sup>1</sup> put his hopes for the reunion of Christendom wholly in the hands of Providence. Jerusalem supposed that the spread of true Christian simplicity, which he considered an essential requirement for concord and union, was inevitable in the divine providential scheme. Simplicity, he claimed, would be the ultimate result of the 'light of true Philosophy'. The Christian churches should let Providence pave the way to unity and in the meantime exercise mutual forbearance among each other. Semler, too, was sceptical about unification schemes. Semler believed that though Europeans were already unified inwardly, there were many practical obstacles to institutional union. In fact, he argued that religious diversity contributed to fostering inward faith, that actual unification was not as necessary as some people thought, and that the attempt to achieve outward union was best left to Providence. Dutch supporters of the universal church, who believed that a single community exercising mutual forbearance was a sensible alternative to sectarian denominations perpetuating ignorance and barbarous theology, took him to task for his scepticism.<sup>2</sup> Lutherans often felt it to be beyond the competence of mere humans to contribute to the divine plan, and the argument that it is not for man but for God to pursue unity has often been regarded as a Lutheran peculiarity.<sup>3</sup> This may well be true, but considering the somewhat similar response of the more progressive sections of the Reformed clergy to the Arminian reunification schemes,<sup>4</sup> it would seem that many regarded religious plurality as

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<sup>1</sup> See section 6.5.

<sup>2</sup> *Algemene Bibliotheek* II (1778), 167–168, in a review of Semler's *Paraphrasis II. Epistolae ad Corinthios* (1776). Dutch contemporaries could find an extensive outline of Semler's views on unionism (and those of many other writers) in [Köster], *Berichten betreffende de nieuwe hervormers*, part III (1791), 31–115. See Hornig, *Johann Salomo Semler*, 195–209.

<sup>3</sup> Ritschl, *Das orthodoxe Luthertum*, 258; Hornig, 'Hindernisse auf dem Wege zur Kirchenvereinigung'.

<sup>4</sup> See sections 3.2 (on Manger), 3.5 and 4.9.

the best way to preserve distinct traditions without forcing particular truth claims on the public as a whole. Providence was invoked to emphasize that the scriptural ideal of religious concord was the necessary result of a long and gradual process, and could not therefore be enforced by fallible and intolerant men. Someone who sympathized with this point of view translated Michaelis' response to the so-called *Neuwiedische Freye Akademie zur Vereinigung des Glaubens*.<sup>5</sup> Though not an adversary of unionism as such, Michaelis, like Jerusalem and Semler, claimed that there already was an invisible universal church and that outward unionism was best left to Providence. Michaelis was afraid that forcing through an ecclesiastical union at this point would lead to the development of three denominations, a united, an orthodox Reformed, and an orthodox Lutheran (a fair prediction of what actually happened in Germany after the *Preussische Union* of 1817, the decree issued by Frederick William III of Prussia which resulted in the unification of Lutheran and Reformed Churches). The Dutch translator fully agreed with Michaelis, and summarized for good measure the views of Christoph Friedrich Ammon (1766–1850), a theology professor at Göttingen. Ammon believed union to be unnecessary for the time being because agreement on fundamental issues already existed and because Christians will eventually reach mutual agreement as a result of 'progressive civilization'. To pursue civilization was man's principal duty; to implement unionist ideals merely served to run ahead of Providence.<sup>6</sup>

Religious plurality, then, could only be sustained by undertaking a nation-wide effort to disseminate communal 'civilization'. Once a civilization premised on freedom was established at a sufficiently high level, Christian unity would prevail by itself. In a nutshell, this is what late eighteenth-century *verlichting* or Enlightenment, as it was pursued by a multitude of Dutch publicists, missionaries, preachers and academics, was all about. Semantically, the term *verlichting* ('enlight-

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<sup>5</sup> J.D. Michaelis, 'Briefe von der Schwierigkeit der Religionsvereinigung', in: *Syntagma commentationum*, 1759, I; D.tr. *Twee brieven (...) behelzende gedachten over de vereeniging der protestantsche, bepaaldelyk van de luthersche en gereformeerde kerken* (1797); published earlier as *De vereeniging der Luthersche en gereformeerde kerken* (1768). The tract consists of two letters written by Michaelis to a Reformed preacher at Neuwied in Germany. On the short-lived Neuwied Academy (1756–1759), an institution supported by the count of Wied, see *Nachricht, Einrichtung, Rechte und Gesetze der hochgräflich Neuwiedischen Freyen Akademie zur Vereinigung des Glaubens* (1757). J.M. von Loën and J.D. van Hoven (see section 3.6 above) were ardent supporters of the Academy.

<sup>6</sup> C.F. Ammon, *Christliche Sittenlehre* (1795).

enment') was closely related to *beschaving* ('civilization').<sup>7</sup> Both words were frequently used in combination, as in a synodal address which presented Christianity as the way 'to the true enlightenment and civilization of a Nation.'<sup>8</sup> Indeed, *beschaving* was often used as an equivalent for *verlichting*. An essay on the causes of the present happy state of knowledge and politeness in Europe did not use the word *verlichting* at all. The writer simply contrasted good taste, arts and manners with medieval ruin, obscurity and barbarism.<sup>9</sup> Both *verlichting* and *beschaving* indicated a processual understanding of the phenomena involved. Suffixed in Dutch with '-ing', these words were gerund constructions implying a gradual process of decreasing barbarism and increasing refinement, or 'politeness'. They were closely related to words of similar meaning, like *verfijning* ('refinement') itself, and *opvoeding* ('upbringing'), *vorming* ('formation', in the German sense of *Bildung*), and *ontwikkeling* ('development'). Neither enlightenment nor civilization were considered to be inherently Christian in nature. Whereas later nineteenth-century writers would coin the term 'Christian civilization' to indicate the qualitatively higher value of a culture imbued with Christianity, and would often juxtapose *Verlichting* and Christendom, their eighteenth-century forebears believed that there could really be only one possible civilization process.<sup>10</sup> In antiquity this process had been steered in the right direction by heathen philosophy, but now that the earth was finally beginning to be 'full of the knowledge of the Lord' (Isa. 11:9), the best guide to progress was evidently the Christian religion.

In this respect the use of the term 'refined paganism' (*verfijnd heidendom*) is telling. Gerard Johan Nahuys (1738–1781), appointed theology professor at Leiden in the year he died, was a highly perceptive orthodox writer who would have supported Peter Gay's thesis concerning the eighteenth-century 'rise of paganism.'<sup>11</sup> His inaugural

<sup>7</sup> Van Eijnatten, 'Protestantse schrijvers over beschaving en cultuur'.

<sup>8</sup> J.E. Winter, *Synodale openings-rede over Haggai II:5* (1784). Johannes Ernestus Winter (1751–1841) was a Reformed minister.

<sup>9</sup> *VL* 1787–ii, 648–655.

<sup>10</sup> Similarly, the term 'Christian Enlightenment' was hardly used, and when it was it signified 'Christian knowledge'. Cf. *Christelijk magazijn, of Bijdragen ter bevordering van christelijke verlichting en evangelische deugd, naar de behoeften van onzen tijd* [*Christian magazine, or Contributions towards the advancement of Christian enlightenment and evangelical virtue, according to the needs of our times*] (1799–1820); edited by the conservative Mennonite Pieter Beets Pz († 1813).

<sup>11</sup> Gay, *The Enlightenment*.



address at the Leiden academy, *De subtilioris ethnicismi, inter Christianos nostra aetate serpentis, noxis ac remediis* (1781), expressed views held by many of his orthodox colleagues. Nahuys regarded contemporary attempts to return to the initial universality of the Christian church as a pagan ideal, as a highly sophisticated attempt, based exclusively on Reason, to establish some kind of Platonic commonwealth. God, contended the civilized heathens, from time to time supported the gradual realization of the universalist project by sending exceptionally clever and inspired men as his ambassadors, including Moses, Lycurgus, Zoroaster, Confucius, Socrates, Plato, Seneca, and above all Christ and his apostles. All who followed these wise men's moral precepts could have salvation, they claimed. Sin was merely another word for imperfection, divine retribution no more than a temporary means to correct mankind, and the traditional notion of satisfaction at best a matter of theological speculation. Anxious to stop the development of refined paganism, Nahuys proffered a predictable solution, namely the publication of a single candid, detailed and extensive confession of the doctrines maintained in the dominant church, attended by a comprehensive and convincing theological defence. The point is that Nahuys did not reject the process of enlightenment and civilization as such; he was merely concerned to ensure its being guided by the proper religious and intellectual forces. In 1789, a periodical was even established for the explicit purpose of combating the 'system of refined paganism', and Nahuys' close friend Klinkenberg later continued his plea.<sup>12</sup>

From the perspective of eighteenth-century Dutch writers, *the Enlightenment* denoting a state of affairs confined to a certain period in time did not exist. What they believed in was a very gradual and on-going process towards less barbarism and greater refinement. While opinions varied as to the precise direction of the process, virtually everyone agreed that processual improvement was valuable in itself and that it led, or ought to lead, to unambiguous results. One spectator observed that where complete freedom of the press in respect of politics and theology existed, anything written with 'Intelligence and Modesty' could appear before the public; anything writ-

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<sup>12</sup> *De Godsdienstriend* (1789), I, 5; Baumgarten-Crusius, *De leer der drieëenheid*, VI (preface by Klinkenberg). Klinkenberg himself held an inaugural address in 1784, *De incredulorum machinationibus reipublicae admodum perniciosis* (1784). See also Van der Wall, *Verlicht christendom of verjijnd heidendom?*

ten in the opposite vein was harmless since it could never influence the 'enlightened and reasonable part of the Nation.'<sup>13</sup> The less conservative divines tended to regard enlightenment as a progressive development towards greater toleration, greater reasonableness, better exegesis and philosophy, and a freer and more sensible method of preaching.<sup>14</sup> Bemoaning the decline of the Dutch ethic, Van Hamelsveld argued that a restoration of the Christian religion to its original purity, through enlightenment and the dissemination of knowledge, would greatly advance the moral stature of the nation, and endow citizens with noble ideas concerning religious and political liberty. Enlightenment, for Van Hamelsveld, was a nationwide evangelical illumination, the establishment of Christ's Kingdom of truth and virtue in the souls of men, and the millenarian dawn of definitive religious concord.<sup>15</sup> Another author observed that some progress in 'enlightenment and toleration' was noticeable even among Roman Catholics, albeit for the time being only in Germany.<sup>16</sup> In 1774, the orthodox *Nederlandsche Bibliotheek* anticipated the famous prize question put by Frederick the Great in 1780, 'Est-il utile de tromper le peuple?' The Dutch author observed that an ignorant people was most advantageous to a ruler who still had to establish firmly the laws of his realm, but that a ruler whose authority was already undisputed (as in the Dutch Republic) would find 'enlightened people' more useful, since the latter readily acknowledged the lawfulness of government.<sup>17</sup> To ignore the Christian Revelation was at best to retard the civilization process and disrupt the moral and civil order, and at worst to falsify it at the cost of human happiness now and in the hereafter.<sup>18</sup> Toleration itself had become a quality inhering spontaneously in responsible, sociable individuals, rather than a praiseworthy

<sup>13</sup> *De Philosoph II* (1767), 233–240.

<sup>14</sup> *VB* 1796-i, 207.

<sup>15</sup> J. van Hamelsveld, *De zedelijke toestand der Nederlandsche natie, op het einde der achtentiende eeuw* [*The moral condition of the Dutch nation, at the end of the eighteenth century*] (1791), 545–562. For a rather similar view, see the *Ontwerp tot eene algemeene characterkunde* [*Sketch of a general characterology*] (1788–1797), III, 67–78, by the Reformed minister and Patriot Willem Antony Ockerse (1760–1826).

<sup>16</sup> *VB* 1789-ii, 392–399.

<sup>17</sup> *NB* 1774/I-ii, 40–42. Note that in 1767 the Mennonite Willem de Vos (1738–1823) had been awarded the first prize by the Holland Society of Sciences for his essay on the question: 'Are we allowed to take advantage of the ignorance of our neighbours?'

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *VB* 1796-i, 625, with a poem on 'The Enlightenment'. This was also the general message of Van Alphen, *De waare volksverlichting*.

moral response to an outward situation sustained by the politico-religious authorities. Forbearance, defined one writer, consists of 'such a pure and heartfelt love for the truth that it is valued above everything else and not disavowed under any circumstance; it is accompanied by indulgence concerning the different opinions of others, by commiseration regarding their misconceptions (in proportion to their significance), and by sincere attempts to bring others to better notions through rational conviction.'<sup>19</sup>

Enlightening the Dutch nation was not often a rewarding effort. Willem Goede, himself a Lutheran enlightener, noted that he had once translated some pieces by Johann R.G. Beyer (1756–1813), a Lutheran from Erfurt, but that he had ceased doing so because of the negligible commercial possibilities for such writings. An almanac, a *Venus and Cupido*, or a prophecy of divine wrath sold much better than books that could be utilized fruitfully by ministers, schoolmasters, and children from all denominations.<sup>20</sup> When Van Hamelsveld claimed in the early 1790s that the people had become irreligious, a reviewer emphatically criticized him. According to the latter, it was easy to demonstrate that no writings met with a larger market than religious writings, in particular those of the 'enthusiastic' and 'mystical' variety. In fact, Dutch readers, whose narrow-mindedness was confirmed by their almost total disregard for the best foreign authors, avidly bought volume upon shoddy volume.<sup>21</sup> German *Aufklärer*, particularly those who advocated 'popular enlightenment' or *Volksaufklärung*, more often than not inspired Dutch efforts towards *verlichting*. As one essayist pointedly observed, the contemporary decrease in prejudice and the increase in knowledge was the result of 'that extensive popular knowledge and all-embracing philosophy, called *Aufklärung* in Germany, and signifying the ennobled condition of man.' Moral refinement, he claimed, now extended to all social circles, including the common man.<sup>22</sup> One important contribution to the Dutch debate was Johann Ludwig Ewald's *Über Volksaufklärung*:

<sup>19</sup> *Algemeen Magazyn*, 1787-ii, 761–797, at 777: an essay 'on the distinction between toleration and indifference' by 'G.J.V.R.'

<sup>20</sup> Goede in J.A. Starck, *Vrijmoedige bedenkingen over het Christendom* (1791), II, 201 note; Goede referred to Beyer's *Handbuch für Kinder und Kinderlehrer über den Katechismus Lutheri* (1785–1786); D.tr. *Handboek voor kinderen en catechiseermeesters* (1789), by W. Goede.

<sup>21</sup> *De Recensent* III (1792), 303–323, 469–488. By way of example the reviewer mentioned *De peinzende christen* (1783) by Petrus Broes (1726–1797), an orthodox minister who favoured new preaching methods.

<sup>22</sup> *VB* 1790-ii, 203–207.

*ihre Grenzen und Vortheile* (1791).<sup>23</sup> Ewald was praised for carefully examining the limits of enlightenment, and his book (considered by some to be too conservative in political respects) was expected to appeal to all 'reasonable divines.'<sup>24</sup> In *Über Aufklärung* (1788), Andreas Riem (1749–1807), a Lutheran pastor exiled from Berlin in 1793 for his controversial religious views, pondered whether Enlightenment was dangerous to the state and to religion, how it influenced the people, and what would happen if religion were again yoked to formularies.<sup>25</sup> Gerrit van Bosvelt, who held an address at one of the departments of the Society for the Good of the Public on the nature of enlightenment and on its consequences for man, the state, and the world, echoed his message. Truth, argued Bosvelt, is the principle, the essence and the end of enlightenment. *Verlichting* resulted in man's happiness by enlightening his mind, improving his heart, ennobling his spirit, and reforming him in the image of God. It advanced the well-being of the state, for it provided the foundation for good government, improved the arts and sciences, and fostered social virtues. It promoted the welfare of the whole world by satisfying human desires, uniting their interests, forming a brotherhood of man, and recreating a paradise on earth.<sup>26</sup>

'Only Enlightenment can produce true conviction, and virtue results exclusively from conviction.' It is, therefore, of paramount importance that we disseminate true knowledge. This was the lesson drawn from Isa. 11 by the writer of an essay on 'Ignorance as a source of intolerance.' He put his finger on the central principle of the polite religious public, namely, that the relations between the individual, religion, and the state are founded on inward conviction.<sup>27</sup> 'Without

<sup>23</sup> D.tr. J.L. Ewald, *Over volks-verlichting, hare grenzen en voordeelen* (1793), by W. Goede; another edition appeared in Utrecht 1793; review in *VB* 1794-i, 452–458.

<sup>24</sup> The *Algemeen magazyn* 1790-ii, 706–725, published an essay by Eberhard on the 'real characteristics' of popular enlightenment. Gerrit Paape discussed the happy effects of popular enlightenment on the French people in *De zegepraal der menschevendheid over de dweeperij en het bijgeloof* [*The triumph of humanitarianism over enthusiasm and superstition*] (1790).

<sup>25</sup> A. Riem, *Over de Verlichting* (1791); the book was forbidden at The Hague. Riem responded to Wöllner's *Religionsedikt*, and in turn provoked Van Alphen's *De waare volksverlichting*. The latter argued that popular enlightenment had to be disseminated in proportion to the limited intellectual abilities and moral resilience of the people.

<sup>26</sup> G. van Bosvelt, *Redevoering over den aard en de natuur der verlichting* [1792]; review in *VB* 1796-i, 161–165; Mijnhardt, 'Het Nut en de genootschapsbeweging', 204–205.

<sup>27</sup> *VB* 1789-ii, 149–169.

a proper civilization and enlightenment of the Public [*Gemeen*], neither the Public itself nor the state can be truly happy.' The degree of civilization and enlightenment determines the extent to which citizens enjoy temporal and eternal happiness. 'Enlightened lovers of mankind' will acknowledge that much still has to be done to educate (*vormen*) the populace.<sup>28</sup> These examples, to which it would be easy to add a myriad others, illustrate the same point. Enlightenment or, alternatively, civilization, was prerequisite to the formation of a polite and nationwide public, comprising virtuous citizens inwardly convinced of fundamental Christian truths.<sup>29</sup> Thus, prior to the separation of church and state in 1796, the confessional public sphere had all but ceased to exist. Hence the transition to the modern nation state was, in terms of public opinion, a smooth one. In this regard, it is perhaps significant that, in the conservative aftermath of the Napoleonic era, some of the most radical democrats of the 1780s and 1790s accepted without much ado the establishment of an authoritarian state that guaranteed its citizens religious freedom while it denied them political participation.

Enlightenment, then, implied the idea of an inward civilization process, a view of the polite public as a communicative space characterized by progressive education and politeness, and resulting in nation-wide community—a far cry indeed from the early modern attempt to control the public by confessional authority. Religious plurality was now accepted by all except the odd reactionary who yearned for a return to Calvinist theocracy. Moreover, the pursuit of religious concord remained a corollary of the polite public until well into the nineteenth century. Illustrative are revival movements ranging from the orthodox Dutch *Réveil* to Dutch versions of the Evangelical Alliance, all of which emphasized the pursuit of religious unity in some way or other.<sup>30</sup> Their emphasis on free civilian initiative reflected the notion of the polite individual as the bearer of religious truth. The autocratic King William I, who formally came to the throne in 1814, was personally committed to unionism. Sustaining the ideals of Orangist conservatives and deriving his religio-

<sup>28</sup> *NB* 1788-i, 495–499, on the Society for the Good of the Public; note that the periodical had now entered into its less orthodox phase.

<sup>29</sup> For an analysis of the relations between Enlightenment, education, and nationalism, see Herrmann, 'Aufklärung als pädagogischer Prozeß'.

<sup>30</sup> Lindt, 'Die Erweckungsbewegung', 38–40; Cossee, "'Geen geloofsformulier, maar een eenheidsbanier.'"

political views from the German territorial states, he established a state-regulated Reformed (*Hervormde*) Church in 1816. In the nineteenth century, this church would function as the central moral agency via which the state recruited members of the bureaucracy, the military, and the clergy. As for the clergy, they generally retained the notion that religious concord was necessarily the result of a long and gradual process of national education under the guidance of a benevolent Providence.<sup>31</sup> They, too, were inspired predominantly by German writers and valued the idea of a comprehensive institutional church designed to mould the nation into civilized, loyal, and tolerant Christians. A characteristic representative of this broad-minded traditionalism was Jodocus Heringa Ezn, whom we met previously as a moderate Bible critic. An esteemed pundit of the new ecclesiastical establishment, he valued confessions as historical symbols and traditional guidelines, but otherwise warmly recommended freedom of inquiry.<sup>32</sup> Ironically, it was a leading Arminian cleric, Abraham des Amoré van der Hoeven (1798–1855), who embodied the conservatism of his age. A resolute defender of state-sponsored churches and a devoted unionist, he even considered dissolving the Remonstrant Brotherhood in the *Hervormde Kerk*.<sup>33</sup>

Under the undemocratic regimes of restoration Europe, religious liberty was regarded as a necessary precondition for the well-being, and hence the spiritual concord, of civilized Christian nations. As far as the Dutch were concerned, the first half of the nineteenth century was the real age of Enlightenment and Civilization, the period in which the legacy of the eighteenth-century toleration debate came into its own. The period witnessed the flowering of a polite public premised on religious liberty—the public of a patronizing, articulate elite, to be sure, and one that discriminated against those who did not subscribe to its principles of liberal Protestantism. Yet the very existence of this civilized, Protestant public reflected a fundamental transformation in the religious infrastructure of European society, and a definitive change in the parameters governing the debate on religious toleration.

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<sup>31</sup> A historical account of unionism predictably concluded that ecumenism was desirable but not opportune; Willem Broes, *Geschiedkundig onderzoek over de vereeniging der Protestanten in de Nederlanden*, The Hague 1822.

<sup>32</sup> De Groot, 'Jodocus Heringa Ezn.'

<sup>33</sup> Cossee, *Abraham des Amoré van der Hoeven*, 125–157.

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This study has sought to outline some developments in an early modern intellectual debate on religious liberty, toleration, and concord, by focusing on changes in the public status of religion in the eighteenth-century Netherlands. These changes in the status of religion were charted by contrasting the 'confessional public sphere' of the early eighteenth century with the 'polite public sphere' generated after about 1760. The confessional public sphere was based on the idea that outward acceptance of certain orthodox religious tenets was an absolute requirement, enforceable by sanctions. By contrast, in the polite public, the inward, individual appropriation of religious truth as such began to function as the moral basis of society. Outward conformity became far less important than inward sincerity. As a result, the widely held belief that orthodox doctrine and formularies of faith had to be maintained as bulwarks of the confessional state was transformed into an emphasis on public education, civilization and enlightenment, that is, on the moral development of citizens as 'polite' or 'civilized' (*beschaafde*) Christians.

Chapter 2 illustrated the way the Calvinist church functioned as an established church seeking control of the public domain. *Salem's peace* by Salomon van Til served to outline the spiritual conditions that ideally had to be met to maintain the confessional public sphere in good order. The Reformed clergy's attempts to impose such conditions were evident from their successful campaigns against radical pietists (Hebrews, Hattemists, and Behmenists), the Moravians or Herrnhuters, and the specifically Reformed brand of experiential piety which provoked the controversies surrounding Eswijler, Schortinghuis, and Kuypers. Objecting strongly to sectarianism—'enthusiasm', 'fanaticism', 'antinomianism', 'mysticism', or 'quietism'—the guardians of the Calvinist church successfully silenced or otherwise controlled the separatist threat to the confessional public sphere. The ideological defenders of confessional orthodoxy were at pains to preserve religious truth as an outward presence in society. In their view, the establishment of truth as a socio-political reality was a precondition to converting and disciplining the people. Pietists turned the matter round. They claimed that inward conversion was a prerequisite for establishing any truth, and hence they directly undermined confessionalism. The negative response to pietism by the guardians of the confessional public sphere was continued, for different reasons, by

those who insisted that the freedom to express one's personal religious views had to be exercised according to the new standards of politeness. As we saw, the confessional discourse which was able to contain the threat of pietist sectarianism was duly succeeded by a discourse allocating so-called 'enthusiasm' and 'fanaticism' to the margins of polite society.

Chapter 3 was devoted to the ideas on toleration which circulated in the Reformed church itself. Between 1745 and 1770, Calvinist church leaders set forth their views concerning toleration in response to growing criticism of their church's claims to being the exclusive guardians of the public sphere. To their critics, however, the arguments of the Reformed clergy seemed untowardly legalistic—as if it were possible to prove the public church's legitimacy by appealing to politico-religious manipulation and violence before, during and after the Synod of Dort. Conversely, moderately orthodox defenders of the confessional public were accused by several right-wing Calvinists for surrendering to the latitudinarian spirit of the age. These right-wing Calvinists themselves responded to the developing toleration debate of the 1750s and 1760s by claiming that only some pietist currents were representative of the 'true' Reformed tradition. The Reformed church also possessed a latitudinarian tradition, represented by the 'Franeker school'. Inaugurated by Campegius Vitringa Sr., the Franeker (or Vitringian) school sustained notions of doctrinal leniency and religious toleration. Some significant individuals were discussed, including Venema, Conradi, Alberti, Manger, and, above all, the orientalist Jan Jacob Schultens. The latter was interpreted as a clerical exponent of the confessional public sphere in its most latitudinarian form.

Two other eighteenth-century debates related to toleration were highlighted in Chapter 3. The debate on secular control over the public church was shown to have been concerned mainly with the legitimacy or extent of the magistracy's influence on the appointment of ministers to ecclesiastical office. As a latitudinarian treatise written by the magistrate Daniel van Alphen demonstrates, such discussions could have a direct bearing on the toleration debate. We further saw that the debate on fundamental doctrines in general, and Calvino-Lutheran unionism in particular, was intimately connected with attempts to preserve the orthodox confessional domain. Eighteenth-century Calvinist overtures to the Anglican Church, the Russian



Orthodox Church, and above all the Lutheran churches reflected the need to strengthen the confessional public sphere, in the face of dissent at home and the Catholic threat abroad.

Common historical experience bound the citizens of the Republic only to a certain extent; views often diverged sharply in regard of religion. Chapter 4 examined the response of Dutch dissenters to the orthodox public sphere, a response that, as we saw, may be described in terms of acquiescence, resignation, and opposition. By emphasizing their adherence to Trinitarian doctrine, orthodox Mennonites in particular acquiesced in the existence of the confessional public sphere, including their own subservient position within it. Reformed attitudes towards Mennonitism changed in the course of the century. Some Mennonites were increasingly associated with mainstream Arminianism, and with the libertarian debates current in Remonstrant circles. Others, such as the pastor Herman Schijn, were seen as orthodox comrades in the battle against freedom of thought and, later, against theological renewal; indeed, by the 1790s, the old Calvinist-Mennonite distinctions were dissolving in orthodox evangelical piety. Among the Roman Catholics, many were resigned to a life under Calvinist domination, and none dared speak openly of an end to Calvinist rule. Opposition could be found especially among Arminians, Collegiants, the later Mennonites, and the later Reformed. The Remonstrant attempt to realize a latitudinarian state church, evident in the writings of thinkers like Grotius, Episcopius, Brandt, and Van Limborch, was continued in the eighteenth century by, among others, Johannes Drieberge. But Arminians were not the only critics of the orthodox public sphere. Many opinion makers initiated and influenced debates by translating latitudinarian texts written by authoritative English and Swiss commentators, including Chillingworth, Tillotson, Hoadly, Locke, Le Clerc, Turretini Jr., Werenfels, and Ostervald. Some writers, like Goodricke, subsequently tried to integrate latitudinarian views into the Reformed Church itself.

The relationship between political and religious liberty was the subject of Chapter 5. Some authors, following Samuel Clarke and Christian Wolff, were concerned to develop a metaphysics that preserved traditional notions of God while incorporating a greater measure of intellectual and religious freedom. Others, like the Spinozists, dispensed altogether with traditional religion and staked radical claims to individual liberty. In this chapter, we focused on the contributions to the Dutch toleration debate of political theorists, jurists,

philosophers, and various independent writers, who were more often than not virulently anticlerical and sometimes even radically opposed to the prevailing political system. Many of them reflected on the virtues of the 'universal church', some wrote political blueprints that functioned as outright denunciations of, and idealistic alternatives to, the confessional public sphere, and virtually all emphasized secular control over the clergy. A discussion of several republican political theorists of the first half of the eighteenth century served to illustrate the characteristic views of many of those who held political power in the Dutch Republic. These magisterial views on the ideal nature of the public church ranged from orthodox Calvinist to latitudinarian, but all shared the same assumptions regarding the relations between politics and religion, assumptions which reflected acceptance of the confessional public. Van Slingelandt's account might have radicalized public debate, since he was an eminent politician who pleaded for far-reaching religious leniency; however, his commentary remained unpublished. Another topic discussed in this chapter concerns the Dutch tradition, initiated by Grotius, of singing the virtues of concord, peace and toleration in lengthy didactic verse. In the eighteenth century annotated poetry remained a popular medium for expressing republican ideals that combined notions of 'true freedom' with anticlerical pleas for religious liberty. Of course, more radical critics of the confessional (as well as the polite) public sphere could also be found. Philosophers who drew on Spinoza formed a niche among critical, self-educated laymen and freethinkers, whose often cheap and anonymous publications ensured a connection with the reading public. Bernard Mandeville, Frederik van Leenhof, and Willem Deurhoff in different ways represented a 'Spinozist' defence of religious liberty, which in public debate was often associated with radical antinomianism and enthusiasm. Some pleas for religious freedom were couched in the form of imaginary travel accounts, often containing utopian representations of an ideal commonwealth, and no less often intended as incisive critiques of the orthodox public sphere. The remarkable *Description of the mighty kingdom of Krinke Kesmes* by Hendrik Smeeks is a case in point. Much imaginary fiction fulfilled the same subversive role throughout the century. It began by leveling criticism at the orthodox public sphere, and ended by disputing standards of politeness.

Chapter 5 further discussed the gradual transition from confessional control to polite debate as reflected in the writings of several natural

law theorists. The ideas on toleration of Pufendorf, Trotz, Pestel, Noodt, and Barbeyrac were briefly analyzed. It was concluded that Dutch natural law scholars often tended to support the confessional public in its latitudinarian form. However, from within this conservative, latitudinarian tradition, views were developed that supported the libertarian claims of the polite public. Barbeyrac's views on the individual conscience illustrate this, as do two later writings: an essay by the Arminian Van der Meersch and a book by the law professor Van der Marck. They developed views minimizing state control over the public church, and looked forward to a nation of reasonable, sociable and pious citizens who could be depended on to foster equity and equality in the state out of personal conviction. Several religious and political radicals openly advocated such ideals in the *Patriottentijd*, a period of intense political debate between 1780 and 1787. Bernard Bosch and Gerrit Bacot in particular defended the notion of a democratic state in which free citizens, liberated from prejudice and educated to pursue truth independently, were inwardly convinced of the Protestant *sola scriptura* as a sufficient basis for public religion. Such writers couched basic assumptions of the polite public in the terminology of natural law, and combined this with radical views on political liberty. Related politico-religious debates were begun in the period around the Batavian Revolution of 1795, when alternative views on the relationship between religion and politics surfaced repeatedly.

The shift in public theological debate which took place between 1760 and 1800 is the subject of Chapter 6. The impact was examined of domestic, English, French, and above all German writings that led to a wholesale subversion of confessional orthodoxy, understood as a public religious practice firmly entrenched in the Old Regime. The aim of the German *Aufklärer* and their Dutch imitators was to provide a religiously sound and intellectually satisfying basis for a new religious public. They attempted to establish a widely accessible theology, undermining traditional doctrinal claims. The intellectual basis of the public sphere was fundamentally transformed in the process. Apologies played an important role in this respect. The commercial success of apologetic writing reflects the anxieties involved in the formation of the polite public. Apologies for Christendom served to disqualify extremes on either side of the religious spectrum, on the one hand the radicals who exercised their freedom irresponsibly, and on the other the orthodoxies who seemed

to deny religious liberty altogether. It behoved a polite individual to opt for Protestantism, in one of its several varieties and on the basis of convincing truth claims, and, above all, by his or her own volition. The new public sphere thrived on persuasion rather than control. Opposition to orthodoxy in general, and to orthodox religious control in particular, is further reflected in the general reception of German *Neologie* (especially Töllner, Steinbart, and Purgold), in the rise of biblical criticism (especially Michaelis' work) and in the pursuit of modernized ecclesiastical history (especially Mosheim's writings). German writers also strongly influenced attacks on the legal and moral assumptions underpinning the religious establishment. Finally, we saw that it was possible to establish the polite public sphere as an alternative to established orthodoxy by emphasizing fundamental doctrines, or doctrinal 'simplicity'. The fewer the doctrines, the greater the number of civilized people who could be convinced of the elementary Christian truths. In this way, the intellectual basis of public religion was thoroughly altered.

The polite public that took the place of the confessional regime had to be populated by citizens who acknowledged virtues associated with politeness. Some basic moral assumptions of the polite public were reviewed in Chapter 7. The polite public that developed rapidly after the 1760s was defined primarily by the Christian 'civilization' or *beschaving* of its members. It premised the general good of the people on freedom, equality and open debate, rather than the outward institutional defence of confessional truths. Instead of being the recipient of established doctrine, the Christian had become a citizen whose creative participation in society was mandatory, and whose inward convictions, regardless of their specific doctrinal contents, furnished the moral basis on which that society rested. Sincerity was henceforth an essential requirement. Novels in particular—such as Nicolai's *Sebaldus Nothanker* and Wolff and Deken's *Willem Leevend*—contributed substantially to the dissemination of ideas concerning sincerity. Furthermore, it was argued that sociability and literary communication were 'organisational' preconditions for the existence of a polite public, since they provided the means to inculcate into society members and readers the shared values of a civilized Protestant nation. The rise of 'religious sociability' in the later eighteenth century indicated that societies and organizations were no longer seen as extensions of the confessional public sphere, but answered to the main principle underlying the new religious public:

the liberty to develop, and give public expression to, sincere inward convictions in free association with others. The same was seen to apply to the media of the polite public, such as the learned and the review periodical. More than societies, however, periodicals tended to be governed by laws of demography and commerce, leading to a minimizing of intellectual extremes. This in turn strengthened the self-professed 'moderation' of the polite public. Like novels, moral weeklies or spectators also contributed to the toleration debate, especially in the 1750s, 1760s, and 1770s. Their informal style, broad range, emphasis on morality and lower prices allowed them to take somewhat greater liberties in criticizing church and clergy than the more 'serious' review and scholarly periodicals.

The polite public put forward a twofold alternative to authoritarian control as a means of bringing about religious community: reasonableness and piety. Both were discussed in Chapter 7. As the communal effort of a new intellectual elite, the polite, nation-wide public presupposed accessibility and intelligibility. Reasonableness in general and the reasonableness of Christianity in particular were seen as vehicles of polite communication, affording a common point of departure for all who participated in public debate. The influence of Wolffian philosophy on Reformed theologians indicates broad support for 'reasonable' communication. We also saw that piety, like reasonableness, was a primary means of communication in the polite public. Heartfelt convictions were necessary to a proper functioning of polite society; they proved the sincerity of one's standing as an independent, self-conscious and responsible Christian. This development is evidenced by preaching reforms, the popularity of writers such as Watts and Doddridge, and the rise of evangelical thought. Notions concerning polite education, in particular the education of the 'common man', were put forward to guarantee the future survival of the polite public. Simple doctrines, practical morality, reasonableness, and piety, instilled into the mind of the common man, would ensure the definitive breakthrough of Christian politeness. The genesis of a polite public premised on inward individual convictions ultimately led to a principled recognition of religious plurality, as we saw in our discussion of writings by Van Rees and Van Hemert. In the Epilogue, finally, we noted that in the eyes of late eighteenth-century commentators, religious plurality could only be sustained by undertaking a nation-wide effort to disseminate communal 'civilization' (usually indicated by the twin notions of *beschaving* and *verlicht-*

*ing*). Once a civilization premised on freedom was established, Christian unity would prevail by itself. Thus, contemporaries regarded concord, toleration and liberty as the inevitable outcome of the formation and development of a polite or civilized public—which, precisely because of its disavowal of ‘extremes’ and its emphasis on reasonableness, moderation and free biblical inquiry, itself excluded certain groups from its domain.



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